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# **WOMEN IN MEN'S GUISE**

*By the Same Author*

**MEN IN WOMEN'S GUISE**

**THE BODLEY HEAD**





CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN

# WOMEN IN MEN'S GUISE

by  
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*Translated by*  
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WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

**I**N a former work, entitled "Men in Women's Guise," we dealt with some curious examples of the human species: the Abbé de Choisy, the Abbé d'Entraignes, Philippe d'Orléans, the Chevalier d'Eon, Savalette de Lange, and many others.

Of those strange personalities, we propose to select two to serve as a kind of introduction to the present volume, viz.: the Abbé de Choisy and the Chevalier d'Eon.

The Abbé de Choisy was brought up as a girl; when he was eighteen, he had not yet donned his first doublet. On the other hand, he attired himself bewitchingly in charming dresses, was an adept at the broidery-frame, thoroughly versed in the arts of coquetry and in all the airs and graces affected by the fine ladies of his century, to wit the seventeenth. At twenty, twenty-five, aye, and even thirty, this alleged young woman found the attire of her supposed sex so much to her taste that she could not bring herself to quit it, and was in the seventh heaven when anyone called her "Madame." She had herself entered under a fresh name on the civil register, and was known, first as "Madame de Sancy" and subsequently as the "Comtesse des Barres." The deception was, apparently, so perfect that everyone took the Abbé for a girl.

The historian and the psychologist have naturally been deeply interested in this strange Abbé, and have perhaps been rather led away by their own ingenuity in the discoveries they believe themselves to have made. She has been dished up with a variety of sauces, *à la Charcot*,

*à la* Krapp-Ebing, *à la* Lombroso, *à la* Havelock-Ellis, and latterly, *à la* Freud. By concentrating so ardently on the subtleties, our investigators have lost sight of the obvious.

The Abbé de Choisy was not so complex a personality as they would have us to believe. Choisy was born with a feminine brain (some men are really women and some women, men. That is a commonplace). His mother, who was probably quick to gain an insight into her son's proclivities, had him brought up as a girl so as to give full play to his instincts, in order that the boy's inherent femininity might blossom forth without let or hindrance. There is no need for him to probe about in order to seek and discover his real nature. There is nothing to worry or hamper him. All he has to do is to become a woman as soon as may be. With all this he is only too ready to comply. He smiles approvingly on the women's clothes that he is invited to indue. How deliciously smooth and caressing they are to the touch, how soft and graceful their folds ! How comely he looks, how charming the image he beholds in his mirror, and how perfectly it reflects the feminine ideal which he cherished in his heart ! This was happiness indeed.

Dr. Magnus-Hirschfeld, of Berlin, in his Institute for the Study of Sex, has put forward, in regard to certain cases of confused personality, theories identical with those of Madame de Choisy, and has adopted a system of education, and re-education, very similar to that employed in the case of the Abbé. It is an essential part of Doctor Magnus-Hirschfeld's treatment to make his patients happy. By bringing ill to cure ill, by suffering his cases to follow the bent which their morbid

mentality, be it chronic or temporary, suggests ; by allowing a male patient who thinks he is a woman to live like a woman, and a woman, similarly afflicted, to live like a man, he doubtless humours the disease, but he notably alleviates the condition of the unhappy people committed to his charge.

The Abbé de Choisy, then, is manifestly one of those rare examples of the male sex whose mentality is the exact counterpart of the mentality of those women who long to be men and whose cases we shall examine in the following pages. Some of these donned male attire because they wished to play the heroine, others because they are compelled to do so by necessity, but the majority did so simply as a matter of taste. All of them disguised the feminine traits in their physiognomy, annulling all visible signs of their sex in order the more thoroughly to play the man. All seemed to be constrained by some imperious necessity, by some ineluctable fate. They are all of them "Abbés de Choisy" of the other sex. They and he immediately suggest themselves for comparison because their conduct, like his, is governed by the same complete sincerity.

The Chevalier d'Eon, as intrepid in the field as he was cautious in the Council Chamber, was condemned by his king to masquerade for forty years in petticoats. Necessities of State required that, alike in his prime and in his old age, he should go by the name of Charlotte-Geneviève, Chevalière d'Eon. At first he rebelled, but afterwards bore his lot in silence. In his case masquerade became a tragedy.

A tragedy indeed, for it was not merely a case of his having to wear women's clothes ; he had to share their occupations, their pleasures and even their sufferings.

A tragedy, too, that secret, slow, but sure transformation of the mind by costume and environment. Of that we may judge from a perusal of the following letter written by Madame Genêt (who had received d'Eon after his metamorphosis) to the mother of the Chevalier-Chevalière :

“ Since your dear daughter has been living in my house I, as well as my daughters, have used every endeavour to bring her to fall in with all our ways. Her dress, her shoes, the management of her body no longer cause her the least discomfort. She finds it all equally becoming and convenient for all our requirements. As she feels that she is destined always to wear female dress, she brings reason to reinforce necessity in her determination to accustom herself to her situation. Nevertheless it is evident to me that she wearies of sitting about all day with my daughters in one suite of apartments. She never takes part in any pastime, she evinces little pleasure in working with her fingers, and it is merely to show her willingness to please, that she occupies herself with a little needlework. I do not suffer her to go out walking, pointing out to her that such a thing was well enough when she wore a uniform, and that, in those days, she did not hold the same rank as she does at present. She is obliged to take lessons under my tuition, and her eagerness to acquire knowledge will soon make an accomplished woman of her. That day will witness the inception of the great reform we have undertaken in order to transform her into an example of perfect femininity.

“ The great task for her here is to dress in magnificent attire, adorned with the Queen's gifts and the presents

bestowed by numerous ladies of her palace ; to appear in ceremonial apparel on Sundays and holidays in the Chapel Royal and to be fully dressed every day before dinner.”

A little further on Madame Genêt adds :

“ Every month, nay every week, witnesses further progress in Mademoiselle d’Eon. This is not surprising, since her transmutation, taking place as it does under the eyes of the court, is working miracles in her heart and mind. Being unable to show herself anywhere save in the attire of her sex, she is compelled to comport herself in a manner suited to her dress and to maintain the attitude which nature and the King’s commands have ordained for her.

“ To do her justice, I must say that since she has been led to look forward to keeping up a considerable establishment of her own, I have instilled in her a desire to learn how to manage a household. Her expectations, which are founded on so natural a basis, have persuaded her to join in our domestic activities in order that she may duly acquaint herself with the duties and occupations that fall to a woman’s lot. This submissiveness which reveals itself in a becoming harmony between her behaviour and her dress, leaves me in no doubt as to her desire to look for contentment in the duties of a household and the happiness of the married state.”

We shall see that, like the Chevalier d’Eon, a man forced to pass himself off as a woman, certain women disguised as men encountered a fate no less darkened by tragedy.

“ In another respect also a woman should carefully refrain from disguising her sex and dressing as a lad whether it be for a masquerade or other occasion ; for even though she had the finest leg in the world, it would appear unnatural, so necessary is it that all things should be befitting and in keeping ; wherefore in dissembling their sex, they mar all their beauty.

“ Therefore it ill becometh a woman to pass herself off as a boy in order to make her beauty more striking, unless it be merely to give herself a touch of the Adonis by donning a bonnet set off with a Guelph or a Ghibelline feather. And even so it becometh not every woman. One must have a doll-like face, as it were, made for the purpose, even as we have seen in our Queen of Navarre, whom it suited so marvellous well that if you merely saw her face thus saucily set off you would have been hard put to it to say to which sex she belonged, whether she was a young and comely youth or, as in sooth she was, a very beautiful lady.”

Such is Brantôme’s very definite opinion on the matter of disguises. It was an opinion which was shared by a host of his contemporaries and not a few Fathers of the Church.

Well, if there have at all times been people with sufficient sternness or irony in their composition to condemn or to ridicule such disguises ; if the Medieval Church pronounced the severest penalties against women passing themselves off as men or men as women, there have always been people eager to don the costume and insignia of the sex to which they did not belong.

There is an old French proverb which runs :

Whoso doth the breeches wear  
Lives a life as free as air.

Which means that the breeches, as being the symbol of supreme authority in the household, give all the power to the husband, or if she is clever enough to wear them, to the wife.

Engravings, prints, pictures, sculptures innumerable, have proved, beyond all question, that the struggle for the breeches is no mere monopoly of the modern feminist movement.

A print by N. Guérard (seventeenth century) displayed a woman tearing at her husband's ear with one hand, and, with the other, clutching his breeches, which she is pulling towards her. Underneath, appear the following descriptive lines :

J'arracherai l'oreille et les cheveux  
 Disait Margot, ou j'aurai la culotte.  
 Et moi, dit Jean, te crèverai les yeux  
 D'un coup de poing si tu t'y frottes.  
 Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait,  
 Au combat tous deux s'apprêtent.  
 Margot était méchante bête,  
 Et Jean des martyrs le portrait.<sup>1</sup>

Then again, in a German eighteenth-century print, we see a woman in soldier's uniform going off to the war, while the man stops at home and turns the spinning-wheel.

*Femme en culotte et homme filant* ("The wife dons the breeches, the man stops at home and spins"), so run the words beneath a coloured Directoire print.

<sup>1</sup> I will tear off your ear and your hair,  
 Said Margot, or I'll have the breeches.  
 And I, said Jean, I'll put your eyes out  
 With one from my fist, if you come messing  
 about with them.  
 No sooner said, no sooner done,  
 They both make ready for the fray  
 Margot was a spiteful brute  
 And Jean the picture of a martyr.

There were plenty of tales, songs and spicy stories giving a detailed account of the adventures that befell men disguised as wenches, wenches as men.

In France there is a whole literature, rather crude in tone, which is devoted to the treatment of this theme, beginning with "The Island of the Hermaphrodites" and concluding with "The Chevalier de Faublas," taking in on the way the works of Andréa de Nerciat, Restif de la Bretonne, and a whole tribe of forgotten or anonymous authors.

Nevertheless there have been some few French writers whose narratives on this theme do not outstep the bounds of seemliness.

Scudéry's "Astræa," the "New Astræa" and "The Comtesse de Banneville" by the Abbé de Choisy, though finicking and childish, may still be read with interest.

A few novels of the nineteenth century: Nodier's "Thérèse Aubert," Théophile Gauthier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin," Cherbuliez' "Comte Kostia," Honoré de Balzac's "Sarrazine" and a lyrical work by Lamartine entitled "Jocelyn," have all treated the subject of sex-disguise. But as a rule the writers have only dealt with the picturesque aspect of the subject. They have had no eyes for the poetry, the wistfulness, the strangely subtle yet intensely human traits that the subject may present.

We should search in vain throughout French literature for characters possessing the poetic grace of a Rosalind.

Monsieur Gustave Fréjaville, in a remarkable study on Shakespearean disguise, has written as follows on this subject :

"The profound originality of Shakespearean disguise

will be the better appreciated if we compare these airy figures, so radiant with youthful grace and charm, so chaste and pure, despite their boldness, with the similar characters in the contemporary comedy of France or Italy. In the 'Talanta' of Aretino, sex-disguise has no other object than to confuse the action, and to facilitate illicit love-affairs. These characters have no individual life ; they are merely brought into being by the dramatic exigencies of the play. But it was quite otherwise in France, twenty years after Shakespeare's death. From 1630 to 1640 travesty, or sex-disguise, was all the rage in the French theatre ; but neither the heroines of the 'Les Deux Pucelles' or of the 'Cléogenor et Doristée' of Rotrou, nor the heroine of Benserade's 'Iphis et Iante,' can, without impropriety—we might almost say without sacrilege—be compared with Imogen, Rosalind or Viola. Such writers were altogether too much given to stressing the unseemly exploits of these girls in boy's attire, and invested them with sensual appetites whose perverted grossness the high-sounding alexandrines in which they were decked out did nothing to conceal.

" In France, whether in literature or in the drama, sex-disguise has inspired practically nothing but salacious fantasies,—sometimes graceful enough indeed—suggestive love-passages, and amorous intrigues. Feminine attire is used to conceal some ardent libertine equal to coping with any emergency and skilled in taking advantage of his disguise to lay siege to each and all of the pretty women that come within his reach.

" Shakespeare, on the other hand, has employed disguise to create a certain number of characters emancipated for a time from the trammels of their sex, and, for that very reason, independent of the conditions which

govern ordinary humanity. True, this independence is only apparent ; for beneath their disguise they all remain subject to the promptings and weaknesses of their hidden nature.

“ ‘ Dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition ? ’ says Rosalind to Celia.

“ Nevertheless, they shine forth, among the other characters of the drama, as though illumined with some mysterious radiance. Their beauty seems not to belong to this world of coarser clay, where only carnal love is known. A garment suffices to turn aside desire. Physical attraction is transformed, as by enchantment, into an indefinable sympathy, where heart and eyes perform their part in unison, but the baser animal instincts never intrude. All this is to ascribe to the outward garb a great power of suggestion. It seems, nevertheless, that this bold view was not foreign to the mind of Shakespeare.

“ In a very striking essay ‘ The Truth about Masques ’ with which the volume entitled ‘ Intentions ’ concludes, Oscar Wilde has proved quite decisively that Shakespeare, more than any other dramatist, ascribes great importance to the costumes of his characters, whether because they lend an added touch of beauty to the poetry, or because they are a potent agency in producing certain dramatic effects. ‘ As to the disguise employed by Shakespeare, the examples of them are numberless.’ Among others, Oscar Wilde instances Portia, Rosalind, Imogen, Jessica, Julia, examples to which we just now referred. Finally he points out that many striking passages in Shakespeare are suggested by costume.

“ We have therefore good reason to suppose that the poet’s strong predilection for disguise was not the

outcome of mere chance. Nor is it merely to be explained by the fact that disguise is a common and convenient theatrical device for bringing about an intriguing situation. It is easy to see that Shakespeare, in making use of this device, does not merely disguise his characters : he transfigures them. The influence of the costume penetrates to the very soul of the wearer. The mind changes its sex, or to speak more accurately, plays its part in a region where the idea of sex has no place. It is true that the English language lends itself to a certain vagueness of ideas which it were difficult to convey in French. The distinction between masculine and feminine forms an exception. *Youth* which we are sometimes compelled to translate ‘*jouvenceau*’ or ‘*jeune homme*’ means simply ‘*jeune*’ or ‘*jeunesse*,’ and, taken as a substantive, is a word of neuter or of common gender. Numerous examples might be quoted in which the English text has no difficulty in avoiding anything calculated to remind the spectator that he is contemplating either a young man or a young woman. But these being of indefinite sex—how are we to regard them save as angels or fairies ? To what world could they belong, save to the world of spirits ? They are of the kin of Ariel, that multiform spirit who cannot, it is true, be properly counted among the disguised characters, although his subtle essence allows him to assume the semblance now of a gracious messenger of the air, now of some nymph of the waters, and anon even of a harpy.”

It would not be easy to define with more delicate insight the poetry of disguise, which, from Achilles onwards, is so curiously interwoven with our literature, our customs and sometimes indeed with our life.

Man and woman striving to resemble one another ; does it not still live on, that graceful legend of Hermaphrodite and the nymph Salmacis irrevocably intermingled in a single body ?

Need we recall Leonardo da Vinci and his angels, his fauns and his virgins, and the strange and adorable yearnings they engender ?

“ O pale Androgyné,” cries Peladan, “ vampire supreme of civilisations that have grown aged and effete, O monstrous precursor of the fire from heaven,

“ Wherefore Vampire ?

“ Man, (shall we say ?). Woman ? Androgyné ?

“ Or simply, Perfect Being ? ”

O. P. G.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
PREFACE		vii
I. THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF THÉRÈSE FIGUEUR		1
II. SOME WOMEN SOLDIERS—		
1. LES DEMOISELLES DE FERNIG		78
2. ANGÉLIQUE BRULON		87
3. "BRETON DOUBLE"		91
III. CHRISTINA, EX-QUEEN OF SWEDEN		95
IV. SOME FANTASTIC MASQUERADEERS—		
1. ANNE GRANDJEAN		136
2. AMELIA BLOOMER JENKS		140
3. MADAME DIEULAFOY		141
V. CATALINA DE ERANSO, NUN AND ADVENTURESS		146
VI. MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN, SWASHBUCKLER AND OPERATIC STAR		171
INDEX		215



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

		<i>Frontispiece</i>
		FACING PAGE
CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN	· · · · ·	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ANGÉLIQUE BRULON	· · · · ·	88
MADAME DIEULAFOY AND HER HUSBAND, M. MARCEL DIEULAFOY	· · · · ·	142
MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN	· · · · ·	174

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## **WOMEN IN MEN'S GUISE**



# WOMEN IN MEN'S GUISE

## CHAPTER I

### THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF THÉRÈSE FIGUEUR

WHEN the Memoirs of General de Marbot first came out—a work in which considerable prominence is given to the story of Thérèse Figueur, otherwise known as “Sans-Gêne”—Moreau, the dramatist, went and called on Sardou to suggest that they should collaborate on a play based on the adventures of that remarkable heroine. But Sardou, who knew all the ins and outs of the playwright’s business, replied that the general public wouldn’t take any great interest in a woman-soldier who, when all was said and done, was rather an out-of-the-way sort of person, and said that they ought to apply the nickname “Sans-Gêne” to a much more celebrated personage, viz. the wife of Maréchal Lefebvre who became Duc de Dantzig. Clearly, the label “Sans-Gêne” was equally well suited to the character of the Duchesse. The latter, whose origin was of the humblest, had, on reaching the topmost rung of the social ladder, by no means discarded the manners and mode of speech which recalled the days when she used to do the washing for the barracks at Strasburg. At the same time she was an extremely likeable woman, no less likeable than her husband, who, when a certain aristocrat of the old *régime* was enlarging on his long and lofty ancestry, blurted out :

"Oh, don't talk too much about your ancestors before me. I'm all my ancestors rolled into one!"

"Madame Lefebvre," writes Lewis Goldsmith, "by her vulgar mode of speech sets all the wits laughing. For a number of years Madame Lefebvre was laundry-woman to the Strasburg barracks. When she married Lefebvre, she took on work as a sewing-woman, and when in 1792 her husband joined the army which was to oppose the Austrians, Madame Lefebvre became one of the sewing-women attached to that force. When Lefebvre was made a general, Madame his wife returned to Strasburg, where she resumed her former occupation of laundry-woman because, as she said, 'You never know how things are going to turn out.' Finally, things having turned out very well for Madame la Générale, she hurried off to Paris to air her graces there. Now, that she is so exalted a *grande dame*, she often goes to Court and contributes with her prattle to enliven the existence of the courtiers."

Madame Lefebvre in fact was often with the Empress, who was vastly entertained by her stories. One day the gentleman-in-waiting told her that the Empress was not visible. "She always is for me," was the reply. She was assured that her Majesty would see no one. "Don't you know me?" she rejoined. "Go and tell her it's me, the Duchesse of Dantzig." The gentleman-in-waiting went in to the Empress, who immediately came to the door of her apartment and said as soon as she set eyes on her visitor, "You were quite right not to take no for an answer, Madame la Duchesse; I am always at home to you."

"One in the eye for you, my boy!" said the Duchesse triumphantly, as she passed in.

Before coming to the story of the real Madame Sans-Gêne, we will quote a few more characteristic sayings of the Maréchale de Dantzig, a woman-soldier if ever there was one, though she never wore the Imperial uniform.

Madame Ducrest tells how the Maréchale was looking over a mansion which she had it in mind to acquire and was, in due course, shown into a large room plentifully furnished with cupboards and handsomely adorned with curtains.

“ What’s this place ? ” said the Maréchale.

“ This, Madame, is the Library,” said the concierge.

“ But what’s it for ? ”

“ It’s where books are kept, Madame.”

“ What tomfoolery ! My husband never looks at a book. No more do I. I’ll use it to keep the jam in. That’ll be much better.”

Madame Villetard tells of the Maréchale’s behaviour at the Court of Napoleon, after the arrival of Marie-Louise.

Napoleon had strictly enjoined the Maréchale to keep a curb on her tongue and to refrain from the free and easy sort of things she was in the habit of saying.

“ That was all right in Joséphine’s day,” he said, “ but I will not tolerate it in the presence of the Emperor of Austria’s daughter.”

Since this injunction had been laid upon her, the Maréchale had hardly dared to open her mouth. One night she was seated at the whist-table and, although absorbed in her game, made a blunder that seriously imperilled the success of the rubber.

“ Madame,” exclaimed her partner in a tone of great annoyance, “ you’ve made a terrible blunder.”

“ Oh, have I ? Well, I don’t care a . . . ”

Raising her eyes she perceived the Emperor who, standing behind her partner, with his arms folded—he had come to watch the game for a moment—was looking at her with fury in his eyes.

“No . . . that’s wrong. I do care a . . . I do care a . . .” she exclaimed, to the huge delight of the company.

Sardou made excellent use of the Memoirs which record the startling deeds and sayings of Maréchale Lefebvre, and the character of Sans-Gêne created by Réjane met with a success as overwhelming abroad as it was in France.

But the playwright and his collaborator would have achieved a triumph no less startling if they had based their play on the life of Thérèse Figueur, the real “Madame Sans-Gêne.”

Thérèse Figueur was born in 1774. Her father, Pierre Figueur, a corn-chandler at Epinal and the son of a miller of Pontoise, married Claudine Viart of Tolmay, a village near Dijon.

Claudine Viart, on her mother’s side, came of noble ancestry.

Thérèse Figueur first saw the light of day in Burgundy, not far from Tonnerre, where dwelt the Chevalier-Chevalière d’Eon of whom we gave a long account in our previous work “Men in Women’s Guise.” Her mother died when bringing her into the world.

The corn-chandler married again, but his second wife showed no affection for the little girl. In point of fact she drank like a fish and assaulted her husband.

Thérèse was nine years old when her father departed in his turn.

“I was the very devil of a child,” she confesses. “I

used to try and clamber up my father's horses, and worried the life out of the lad who was taking them to water, until he hoisted me up on the crupper behind him. I was a dabster at shouting 'Gee up!' and 'Gee whoa!' I could whistle properly, and was a dead shot with a stone.

"A soldier, a dragoon, who often used to come to our home, took a fancy to me and called me his 'little wife.' I called him my husband, and liked to put his great helmet on my head.

"One day, he fell out with another soldier, and as they went out breathing mutual defiance, I ran after them, and came up with them at the scene of the combat, a field of asparagus. I tried to get hold of their swords with my little bare hands, and the upshot of my intervention was that the two foes embraced each other, and 'my husband' carried me home in his arms, a very happy little girl. That was the earliest symptom of my passion for dragooning it.

"My carelessness regarding money was another no less certain indication of my soldiering proclivities. Some little time before his death, my father had presented me with a little leaden money-box, which I took hold of with considerable awe. Later on, my natural curiosity led me to explore its interior. There I found a certain number of white coins, which I slipped into the pocket of my apron. 'Splendid,' thought I, 'for playing hopscotch in the market-place in front of the church.' The first white coin which I shoved with my foot in lieu of a stone excited the admiration of my playmates and, at no long interval, the cupidity of their mothers. There was no lack of charitable souls only too eager to offer me a lovely bright, brand-new halfpenny in exchange for my

crown pieces, and being a good child, well brought-up, who knew its manners, I never once failed to accept."

The crowns thus converted into copper, and a little property, which melted away in *assignats*, was about all that Thérèse inherited from her father. She would have been sent to an orphanage had not one of her mother's brothers, Joseph Viart, a sub-lieutenant in a regiment of foot, come and taken her away to the house of one Muideblé, who had a laundry at Rueil, where the child lived as happily as could be and got to know Clément Sutter, whose name she was afterwards to bear.

Thérèse was now ten years old, and Clément Sutter eleven, and the latter was already a drummer in the Swiss regiment quartered at Rueil. His duties in this capacity were not, it seems, exacting, and the boy combined them with a job he had at a pastrycook's, and, in addition, he "was supposed to go to school." It was a curious school. The master, who combined his pedagogic functions with the callings of assistant-laundryman, barber and chair-mender, also discharged the duties of sacristan. When the master took it into his head to open school, not one of the boys or girls of the village put in an appearance.

In company with Clément Sutter and the young ragamuffins of the neighbourhood, Thérèse Figueur became a regular boy.

Alas, this blissful existence was not of long duration. One day an uncle from Provence came to Rueil and took the little girl away to Avignon.

Put to board at a cloth-merchant's, she learned to wield the yard-wand, to keep the books, to sew, and was initiated into the secrets of "trimming," without, however, discovering anything attractive in the art. Her

passion for an open-air life, fomented by her truant existence, would insist on gaining the mastery. "My lungs craved for the open air. I was miserable in that shop, and I should have withered away behind the counter."

The Revolution broke out. Thérèse was now fifteen. Though she knew and cared nothing about politics, she was nevertheless conscious of a leaning towards the Royalist cause. Like her uncle, she held that France had disgraced herself by sending her King to the scaffold.

On the 2nd June 1793, Paris decided that the Girondists should be outlawed. This decision was the signal for revolt at Avignon and throughout the southern districts. A violent anti-revolutionary movement broke out, fostered and guided by the Royalist party, who dissembled their activities under the label of Girondins. The sections smashed up the Jacobin municipal organization at Avignon ; the suspects were dragged from their prison, and the republicans, who then went by the name of Slaughterers, flung in in their stead.

The middle-classes, the *bourgeoisie* and the shopmen, took up arms and organised themselves into combatant associations.

Thérèse's uncle, as being an ex-soldier, was picked out to take command of a company of gunners. And Thérèse herself always found some excuse for going about with her uncle, the captain.

Perhaps her uncle had an inkling of his niece's warlike proclivities. Perhaps he was afraid, as he himself declared, of what might happen to her virtue if the forces of the Convention should gain possession of Avignon. Be that as it may, the worthy man, importuned by his niece, gave her leave to put on man's attire.

“After that,” says Thérèse, “I could go about with him anywhere and everywhere, even on campaign. A length of royal blue cloth was taken from stock, and out of it they made me a gunner’s tunic. This I completed with a pair of blue and white striped ticking breeches that buttoned up all down the sides, from top to bottom. Breeches of this pattern went, I fancy, by the name of ‘*charivaris*.’ Having buttoned up my coat, buckled on my sword, and rammed my cocked-hat over my head in the true swashbucklering style, I joined in the chorus of the ‘*Réveil du Peuple*’ with the rest of our Federal gunners. But when he got me on the quiet, my uncle endeavoured to inspire me with worthier sentiments and with love and veneration for my King.” From which it will be observed that, up to this point, Thérèse had no very settled political convictions. To make up for it, she was lively, alert, indefatigable, racing from gun to gun with the captain’s orders, or proudly bearing along a burden of cannon-balls, grapeshot and cartridges. “Nature, in jesting mood, had caused me to be born a girl. I now returned the quip. No doubt now about the part I was to play. Thérèse Figueur was henceforth a soldier !”

In order to gain command of the valley of the Rhône and to join hands with the insurgent party in Lyons, the rebels of Provence and Languedoc had to measure themselves against the republican troops at the Pont du Saint-Esprit. As ill luck would have it, Dubois-Crancé, who was directing the movements of the Piedmont army from Grenoble, detached therefrom a force of 4,000 men under General Carteaux to deal with the Federals of Avignon. This was a picked corps, and their enthusiasm for the Republic and the cause of *Liberté* rendered them

invincible. The men of Provence, on the other hand, were utterly devoid of discipline and innocent of the most elementary military training. Hurled back in disorder, they took refuge in Avignon, but after three days' siege were compelled to open their gates to their victorious adversaries. The citizens who were involved in the affair hurriedly evacuated the fortress and withdrew to Marseilles. The company in which Thérèse Figueur was serving was the last to leave. They went out taking their stores with them and covering the retreat.

“ We had not progressed two stages on the Lambesc road when some hostile mounted scouts appeared in our rear. Immediately the cry went up ‘ Every man for himself ! ’ and my uncle saw all his men scurrying off right and left across country, and in the twinkling of an eye the whole column had melted into thin air. He rushed up to one of the guns, caught hold of the gunners by the arm and strove to keep them back. But every one had lost his head. No one paid the smallest heed. One leapt on to a horse, another thrust the ramrod between his captain’s legs. Meanwhile the enemy were close up and coming on at the gallop. I was standing alongside my uncle. Then something, I don’t know what, went through my head like a flash. The fuse was lying at my feet in the dust. Mechanically, I stooped down and picked it up. My heart beat wildly, and my hand shook like a leaf. I stretched out my arm and moved in the direction of the gun that was loaded with grapeshot. Suddenly the gun went off. Through a cloud of dust I could distinguish signs of sudden confusion among the enemy, and perceptible gaps in their ranks. It had been the affair of an instant, a dream in

very truth. When I came to myself, I found myself being violently dragged along by my uncle. We took to our heels and ran for all we were worth."

Uncle and niece took refuge among the vines ; but they were discovered immediately and surrounded by a cordon of horse. "No one ever dreamt that my uniform concealed a woman. No, the troopers looked surprised and full of pity for the boy who had flung his arms about his uncle to prevent him from using his sword."

"'Get out of the way, little man,' said the men as they took aim at the captain ; 'out of the way for a minute while we settle accounts with him.'"

Then some other men arrived on the scene and Thérèse heard them say :

"It was the little 'un that fired the gun. I saw him with my own eyes. Shoot the pair of them, I say."

Just at this crisis an officer came up and took the uncle and his niece under his protection. Thérèse then learnt what her cannon-shot had done : it had put eight poor devils out of action.

They bound the prisoners' hands behind them and tied them to the horses' tails, and, in this pitiable case, lugged them back along the road to Avignon. But rather before they reached the city the soldiers took pity on uncle and niece, unbound their hands and invited them to have a drink. The captain was about to respond in the prescribed manner to the health which his adversaries had drunk, when Thérèse put in her spoke.

"What !" she exclaimed. "Drink with those ruffians ! Why you can't have any heart, man ! "

Quite unruffled, the uncle replied, "Peace, child ; what do you know about war ! "

Whereat Thérèse went and sat apart, looking anything

but pleased, for she opined that, for a beginner, she had done amazingly well.

Since the entry of the Conventional forces the Avignon prisons had been filled to overflowing. In order to find quarters for the fresh prisoners they had put up barricades fore and aft of one of the arches of the old bridge, through which there was no longer any flow of water. Into that improvised dungeon they crammed four hundred people.

“ We had straw to lie on. A kind gaoler, who bore the fine name of Jean Bart, handed us out our ration of bread and water. Those who could afford to pay the price, an exorbitant one, he condescended to provide with sausages and condiments. At intervals, a dozen or so would be called up for trial, after which it was a case of being shot or undergoing treatment from the Great National Razor, as the Guillotine was facetiously denoted. I don’t quite remember which means the authorities favoured. Perhaps it was six of one and half a dozen of the other.

“ After a fortnight, being sick to death of such a dreadful life, I drew Jean Bart aside, and letting the light glint on a little watch which I had taken the precaution to slip into my bosom, just as the *Allobroges* (as General Carteaux’s men were called) were laying hands upon me, I addressed him thus :

“ ‘ Citizen gaoler, this watch is thine if thou wilt but render me a service. Go and seek out the Citizen General-in-Chief ; tell him that I am a girl, that I pray that he will take my sex into account, and order that I shall be sent hence forthwith and—this above all—in company with my uncle.’ ”

Now this Jean Bart was seemingly no bad fellow, for, gazing open-mouthed at the sham soldier and pushing

away the proffered watch, he turned and went, with tears in his eyes.

The very next day, uncle and niece were summoned into the presence of General Carteaux. The two prisoners found him, in company with his wife, just finishing his luncheon. No sooner was the door opened than, seeing Thérèse, he called out :

“Come here. I know all about you. So it’s you, is it, my fair *Citoyenne*, that goes firing off guns ? It’s you that gave my *Allobroges* such an ill time of it. Why, you know, you’re a regular heroine ! ”

Thérèse at once stood stiff at attention ; eyes right, the little finger on the seam of her breeches, and looked the General straight in the face.

“Ah, come now,” he continued ; “what have my *Allobroges* done to you to make you so angry with them ? ”

“They are ruffians, incendiaries, robbers, malefactors.”

“The Federals, my dear young lady, have poisoned your mind, and brought you to a pretty pass. But you are young ; and it would be a pity to die ; what think you ? You are brave ; were it not better to fight for your country, to serve the Republic and the Convention ? Come, enroll yourself on our side.”

“Impossible, *Citoyen Général*.”

“Why ? ”

“Because the Republic is a horde of assassins, because that Convention of yours has slain my King.”

“But you’re off your head. You’re raving mad ! ”

At this point the General’s lady joined in the debate and tried to bring the wrathful Thérèse to see things in their proper light. But that was too much for the General’s patience.

“Hark ! ” he cried. “Let her do as she will. Go

back to prison and the devil take you ! I wash my hands of you. Or, become one of us. If you do, I will let you choose the best horse in my stable."

Now Thérèse was not so strong a Royalist as not to prefer a goodly horse to the "National Razor." All the same, she thought it well not to make too ready a surrender, and begged leave to refer the matter to her uncle. The latter, who had had his ear glued to the keyhole, had overheard all that had passed.

" My child," said the Captain, " 'tis God hath sent thee this means of safety. God would not have thee die. Take the chance that is offered thee, take it here and now."

So saying he imprinted a kiss on her forehead and pushed her back into the room.

Then Thérèse turned once more to the General.

" Citoyen Général," said she, " just one condition more."

" What's that ? "

" The life and liberty of my uncle."

" Hum ! Lucky for him he has thee for his niece. Well, I agree ! "

" And now," said Thérèse, " before I finally decide, let me have a look at the horse you say you'll give me."

Carteaux burst into a roar of laughter and bade the uncle come in and drink a bumper to him and to the merry lassie. Then they all went down to the stables and our heroine picked out a little filly with a coat of dapple-grey. Thereafter they decked her out in the uniform of her new allegiance, the green tunic of the light cavalry—green, close-fitting breeches, top-boots, with tassels, half-way up the leg, black leathern helmet with horsehair plume. As for the Captain, he too burnt

his boats and was received, with the rank and insignia of quartermaster, into the Republican army.

“And now, what are we going to call her?” queried the General.

“General, there is only one name for her. Call her ‘Sans-Gêne.’ I assure you that when we took her prisoner she had no compunction about calling us a lot of cowards because we were talking of killing two foes who had ceased to offer resistance.”

“Sans-Gêne it shall be,” said the General.

That was in July, 1793.

When Avignon was deemed to have received due chastisement and Carteaux felt himself strong enough to march on Marseilles, he led his forces across the Durance. Thérèse, who had been put with a detachment of scouts, made her first prisoners—some of her former companions in arms be it noted—and was hugely delighted. It was no bad thing for the prisoners that the General had a soft spot in his heart for Thérèse.

“Look you, Citoyen Général,” she pleaded. “They’re good Frenchmen enough. They have been led astray, just like me, that’s all.”

Thérèse Figueur claims that she saved the lives of a host of prominent Marseilles folk in this way.

That she did so may be true enough, for she was carried shoulder-high along the quays of the Old Port and received the fraternal salutation from General Doppet, Municipal Councillor, in full dress, presidents of sections and all manner of societies, and many other big-wigs besides, the whole affair winding up with a patriotic banquet.

“My wits would certainly have forsaken me if I had responded to one in a thousand of the invitations I

received to take wine with this person and with that, and if I had not just raised the glass to my lips and nothing more. I was not as yet an old campaigner ; and, besides, I never cared much for wine-bibbing."

After Marseilles, Thérèse and her companions proceeded to take part in the siege of Toulon, which had fallen into the hands of the English.

" Thus it was against the English that I was called upon to do my first piece of real fighting ; for, after all, my firing off the cannon on the Lambesc highway had only been a sort of fluke and our march on Marseilles a sort of rebel-hunt. One day I was told off to carry soup to one of our outposts. I had a good distance to go ; a good few yards of the road were swept by the fire from one of the forts : Fort Malbosquet, I fancy. I fixed the bowls on to my horse, said good-bye to my uncle and my friends and set off with great determination. And so I went forward, a little solitary thing, humming a tune. When I reached a certain spot I heard a loud report coming from where the accursed fort was situated. That considerably impressed me, and I ceased my song. Just then, another bang. I cast my eyes all round about me. There I was in the middle of that flat, dried-up, mysterious stretch of country that was a sort of target for all the forts around. The place I had to get to was still a good way off. And that cursed fort, thought I, is very near. Then came a third explosion. This time I certainly heard a hissing noise. I was absolutely sure I saw a bullet whizz past. I was more deeply impressed than ever. Then, all of a sudden, my horse stopped dead. There was a loud burst of laughter. Behold I was back again among the comrades I had left, and the soup bowls were still fixed to my horse's flanks. My

uncle was the only one who didn't laugh. On the contrary, he looked at me very sternly. I have never been able to explain how my horse came to turn round like that, and to change from trot to gallop to bring me back again. My uncle never said a word to me for the rest of that day. I was very much ashamed of myself and felt like crying."

Next day, when things were slack for an hour or two, the troopers of Thérèse's company gathered round in a circle, and in a doleful tone of voice our heroine's uncle proceeded to deliver himself of the following solemn harangue :

" Sans-Gêne showed the white feather yesterday. Sans-Gêne behaved like a coward ; Sans-Gêne deserves to be degraded ; we will proceed to degrade Sans-Gêne."

Sans-Gêne said never a word, but her face went crimson.

" Now then," continued the uncle, beckoning to a corporal, " do your duty. Off with her buttons ! "

The corporal took two or three steps towards the young woman, but she promptly broke through the circle and rushed off towards the place where the horses were tethered. She groped in one of the saddle-bows, pulled out a pistol and, putting the barrel to her brow, shouted :

" Uncle, they shall not degrade your niece. I'll blow my brains out sooner."

As a matter of fact the uncle had stage-managed the whole thing.

" All right, Sans-Gêne," he cried with a laugh ; " all right. When a soldier goes to work like that to put things right, we know he'll never trip again."

Everybody loved and esteemed Thérèse. Her new General, Dugommier, who had succeeded Carteaux,

often had her to dine at his headquarters. She knew every one in the camp, save one young officer—rather a mysterious personage—he, who, later on, was to play a considerable part in the history of the world.

“One morning, a cold, grey, disagreeable morning, I was told off for fatigue duty. With my cloak wrapped well about me, I was just dismounting and going to tie up my horse, when I heard someone calling me from the staircase of a small dwelling-house near by.

“I went up a few stairs and encountered an officer who had descended about as many to meet me. He held out an envelope containing some orders that had to be taken to a certain destination. I vaulted into the saddle and rode off. But on my way back from discharging this commission I paid more attention than I had in starting to a sort of kitchen that had been rigged up in a field fringed with olive-trees along which I had to pass. My horse and I eagerly craned our necks towards the fire which was blazing and crackling away in great style. I sniffed in the succulent odour of a ham which was turning and turning on an improvised spit. How nice it smelt and how inviting it looked. Sergeant-Major Masséna and Sergeant Junot were acting as chefs. As soon as they saw who I was they invited me to come and give them my advice. How was I to refuse? I got down from my horse and took up my position on the trunk of a tree, and stretching out my feet to the fire I proceeded to refresh my internal economy with a slice of ham. This agreeable process took time. I then returned to headquarters just as the Commander-in-Chief was coming out. He responded to my military salute with a kindly smile and a friendly little pat of the hand.

“I went up to the upper floor of the maisonnette to

the room which had been turned into the office of the general staff, and handed in a receipt for the letter I had been to deliver. The officer who had sent me was leaning over a table with a map in front of him and a compass in his hand. It was lighter here than it was on the staircase: I saw he was wearing a commandant's epaulettes, that he was of slender build, with a muddy complexion, sunken cheeks, angular features, and yet his countenance was one of those which somehow command attention and linger in the memory. On the table was a hat with a yellow plume, which appeared to me extraordinarily dirty: a circumstance that was perhaps to be explained by his frequently having to be in the thick smoke of the batteries. Looking round in my direction, he took out his watch.

“ ‘It should have taken three-quarters of an hour,’ said he shortly. ‘You’ve been an hour and ten minutes. Go to the guard-room.’

“ That meant to the police quarters, a tent that stood about fifty paces from headquarters. Thither I went in a state of fury, bitterly reflecting that that slice of ham was going to cost me my liberty. Two, three, four mortal hours went by. I began to feel very uneasy, pent up there like that, bewailing my captivity all the more bitterly because the headquarters’ dinner-hour had arrived, and instead of the meal and the brilliant company I had been looking forward to, I was going to be reduced to the most miserable of *ordinaires*. But Providence took pity on me. A young officer, one of the General’s sons, came and spoke a word or two to the sentry who had me in his keeping, and behold I was suffered to depart and partake of the dinner I thought I had lost for ever.

"Just as he was sitting down to the table, the young man said: 'My father inquired what had become of Sans-Gêne. He had seen her about, he said, in the course of the day. Let someone go and tell her to come up. They called and called and looked everywhere for you. My father was insisting that you should be found, when the Artillery Commandant remembered sending a little fellow answering to your description to the guard-room; he added that the little fellow had been wasting his time and that he was, for the time being and by his orders, in the guard-room. Whereupon my father exclaimed: "What, Commandant, you really had the courage to put Sans-Gêne in the guard-room!"'

"'Who is Sans-Gêne?' asked the other. 'A youngster, a trumpeter?'

"'Sans-Gêne,' answered my father, 'is a young woman and a brave one too. She has already proved herself a first-rate gunner. For that reason alone you might have shown her a little more consideration.'

"Then he started to tell them all about you. I got up from my place and hurried away to set you free.'

"When I came in," Sans-Gêne continues, "and sat down beside the General he turned and looked at me. His tall figure was still spare and active despite his fifty years, and with his clear-cut features, his keen, kindly eyes, he was a man to command respect.

"'Come now, Citoyenne,' said he. 'How came you to get put in the guard-room? One of us, too? Our little Sans-Gêne! Aren't you ashamed?'

"'Citoyen Général,' I answered, 'don't talk to me about it. It was a glaring injustice.' And looking across at the confounded Commandant, I added: 'There's the man that played the dirty trick, that nigger over there!'

“With all these men about me, I was a woman once more. I had regained my feminine ascendancy.

“As you may guess, my sally brought the house down, and put everybody in a good humour. But I was still furious.

“‘Yes, mon Général,’ said I warming to my task, ‘he’s a nigger—a regular nigger, just an ugly-faced nigger. Look at him, all of you, and say if he isn’t yellower than his plume !’

“Whereupon the General and all his staff began to shout with laughter like a pack of schoolboys, seeing who could make the most noise.

“But I must do the Commandant justice. He excused himself with a better grace than I should have expected from his face, that looked for all the world as if it had been moulded in bronze.

“He bore my vituperative sallies with a resignation that was almost kindly. After a while my eyes sought another direction and were wholly concentrated on my plate, what time the big-wigs began to talk among themselves, forgetting all about me.

“It was the Commandant of Artillery who was listened to with most attention.

“‘What’s his name ?’ said I after a while, pointing to him. ‘What’s the name of that nigger there ?’

“‘Bonaparte,’ was the answer.”

Some little time after that, while the siege of Toulon was still in progress, the Republicans had established a battery and a redoubt to protect a strategic point known as “The Two Mills.” This battery inconvenienced the English and they decided to make a sortie in order to silence it. While a column approached from the Market Place, a landing-party was put ashore from the British

men-of-war, and this second column advanced with the object of taking the battery in the rear. Thérèse was at this time at a spot from which, although some distance away, she could mark the progress of the enemy's attack. The French put up a stout resistance, but after a certain time had elapsed they gave evidence of being short of ammunition. Their fire perceptibly slackened.

"Who'll volunteer to take them some cartridges along?" shouted an officer.

"I will," said Thérèse.

Spreading out a sheet on the ground, they filled it with a supply of cartridges, and, vaulting into the saddle, the young girl tore, hard a-gallop, across a zone swept by the enemy's guns, and made for the redoubt where they had run short of ammunition.

"The brave fellows, who were carrying on as best they might, couldn't have been more delighted if they had been children and I had brought them a bundle of Christmas presents."

The men inside the redoubt were now in a position to take the offensive, and the English had to retire.

As for Thérèse, she was in the seventh heaven. She flung her hat in the air and danced for joy that she had been able to contribute to such a happy termination of the combat. Then suddenly she tottered, and went as pale as death. They found she had a bullet wound in the shoulder, before she knew it herself.

After the siege of Toulon, the Chasseurs Allobroges were sent to Castres, where the Dragons de Noailles had formerly been quartered. Thérèse Figueur and her companions now belonged to a new regiment, known as the "*Quinzième*"—The "Fifteenth" (April 4th 1794).

At Castres, Thérèse perfected herself in the art of

equitation. She learnt how to jump ditches and hedges, how to charge on horseback, how to handle the sabre, and draw the sword.

“I was just about the average height for a French-woman, four feet eleven inches. The heels of my riding-boots gave me a good inch more. I had a straight, well-turned leg, which, I was told, set off my buckskin breeches to perfection. I had never been what people call pretty. The smallpox had left its mark upon my face, and my nose, though it was not unduly big, would have been all the better for being Greek or Roman. But a pair of dark, expressive eyes, a delicate, white skin, a healthy complexion, teeth of dazzling whiteness, a fairly high and fearless brow, a symmetrical and graceful head (I don’t include lots of dark hair, for at that time I wore it powdered and done up in a pigtail)—the whole made up a combination which proved universally attractive and in which, all vanity apart, people said they noted a careless gaiety, a certain amount of intelligence, never, alas, improved by cultivation, and, finally, a good, kind heart.”

Obviously, Thérèse Figueur was not disposed to be too hard on herself.

At Castres, where the women have always been noted for their good looks, Thérèse soon got mixed up in some adventures. She was passionately fond of dancing, and a charming child of sixteen, a gardener’s daughter, the veriest simpleton alive, straightway became her favourite partner. Her mother let her do as she pleased, and the young lady took advantage of her freedom to dangle lovingly round the neck of our dashing dragoon.

But our modest trooper played the timid lover, limiting himself to vague declarations and the most

nebulous of promises. Just a few chaste kisses—not a whit more than that.

These harmless exchanges had been going on for a month or more when, one Sunday, just when the dance was due to begin, Thérèse, for some minor shortcoming or other, found herself confined to barracks.

But our heroine being highly unwilling to deprive her gardener lass of her partner, found a *locum tenens* who kindly consented to go to the ball in her stead. Alas, this obliging fellow was by no means content to limit the entertainment to dancing with the young woman. He went a good deal further than that, but took good care to keep it dark from Thérèse.

And now our *soldate* began to look for conquests in other directions and somewhat neglected the green sapling.

But one fine day papa-gardener came up to Thérèse and addressed her roundly as follows :

“Look here, Mister Dragoon, this is the first time you’ve been in garrison here. That’s plain. Well, then, let me tell you that at Castres, when a man seduces a girl, he marries her, and you’ll marry my daughter.”

When she heard his opening words, Thérèse made ready to give the unhappy wight a sound box on the ears. But a moment later, when he invited her to become a husband, her wrath was changed to merriment. Strong, as well she might be, in her innocence of the crime imputed to her, she contented herself with consigning the worthy parent to the devil and all his myrmidons.

“I shall go and complain to the Colonel,” answered the latter, “and we’ll see about it.”

The Colonel sent for Thérèse. She found him in his

drawing-room, his wife seated at his side, "both looking as grave as two judges in a court of justice." Facing them stood the father, stammering and blustering, and the mother, upright and stiff as a poker, her hands in her apron pockets. Behind them was the luckless wench, weeping scalding tears.

"*Sans-Gêne*," said the Colonel, in a lofty tone, "you are charged with an odious offence. What have you to say for yourself? I am here to see justice done and to punish those who deserve it."

The father then launched forth into a long rigmarole, as indignant as it was confused, which he wound up by catching hold of his daughter's arm and putting her in the middle of the circle formed by the judges, the complainant and the accused. The mother poured out a torrent of stupid rubbish to the Colonel's wife, saying that, up to now, she and her daughter had always been able to hold up their heads wherever they went in Castres, and that *Figueur* must be the devil incarnate to have so misled her with specious words as thus to have compassed her ruin. She terminated her discourse by demanding a court martial and a firing-party for our heroine. This did not seem greatly to perturb the Colonel and his wife. At that time there were many requests for shooting-parties by folks who had people they were anxious to get rid of.

However, the Colonel's wife rose and requested mother and daughter to go into an adjoining room.

"*Sans-Gêne* will come too," she said, "and I have no doubt that *Sans-Gêne* will give us such evidence as will lead us to change our views about her moral character."

As soon as the four women found themselves alone,

Sans-Gêne unfastened a buckle or two of her uniform and displayed convincing evidence of her true sex.

The mother dropped down with surprise.

On quitting Castres, Thérèse and her companions were ordered to proceed in the direction of Perpignan to strengthen the positions taken up by the forces operating under Dugommier's command in the Pyrénées-Orientales. At this juncture the army in question was holding up the Spanish troops, who were endeavouring to force their way into France and had already gained possession of Collioure and Port-Vendres. While Dugommier was busy with his plans for driving out the enemy, his troops were passing the time merrily in Perpignan. Three members of the Convention—Soubrany, Projean and Milhaut, who were there on a special mission—gave a series of dinner-parties at which Sans-Gêne was always a welcome guest.

“At one of these dinners [she says] I was struck with the air of constraint exhibited by almost every one present. Hardly anyone seemed inclined to speak, and when they did venture on a remark, they would get no more than a single word in reply. I turned to Soubrany, who was on my right, and complained of this uncomfortable state of affairs.

“‘Anyone would think,’ I said, speaking loudly and distinctly, ‘that we were all attending a funeral.’

“He darted me a look out of the corner of his eye as though to tell me to be quiet. When he thought the opportunity was favourable and that our conversation would not be observed, he said in an undertone :

“‘Citoyenne Sans-Gêne, do you see that woman there, sitting between Projean and Milhaut ? She is *la belle Lyonnaise*, that is the only name I know her by.

She has come here from Lyons with the Dragons de la Montagne, splendid fellows, staunch patriots, but they don't smell exactly like rose-water. She is in close touch with Paris. Anything that strikes her as at all suspicious she reports on the spot. At Lyons and Nîmes more than a hundred people have had their heads off through her. That's why, when she's about, you have to be mighty careful what you say. Even we, highly placed as we are, Controllers of the Department, don't feel very comfortable. So mind what you say and do.'

"I looked across and saw a young woman of enormous stature wearing a black silk dress with a tricolour scarf folded crosswise over her chest. She had on a red cap, and a mass of black hair fell in disordered profusion about her splendid shoulders. That was her principal attraction. Her features were regular, and might even have been called beautiful if her lower jaw had not been so heavy, her forehead less flat and a little higher. Her eyes, which were nearly round and quite lustreless, had the kind of expression one associates with mental deficiency. It was really a remarkable thing to see all those men, several of them in high positions, trembling before a woman like that, merely because she had contrived by the exercise of a sort of low, malicious cunning to make herself something of a power.

"That a party of men should comport themselves in this abject manner gave something of a stimulus to my womanly pride, though it also made me blush for the uniform I was wearing."

Here, for the first time, in the Memoirs that Thérèse dictated at Saint-Germain Leduc, we detect a note that sheds an interesting light on her rather curious mentality.

The extract we quoted a little way back, in which our

heroine speaks with some complacency of her own physical characteristics, is of no great value from the psychological standpoint, but this double emotion which she experienced, as woman and as man, though not perhaps conclusive, is certainly not without significance. It is the first indication we have of the psychological evolution which was brought about in the woman by the wearing of man's attire and the living a soldier's life.

Concerning *la belle Lyonnaise*, Thérèse goes on to say :

“ She aroused in me all the feeling of horror and disgust that come over one at the sight of a venomous animal. I watched her every movement with hostile curiosity, and the longer I looked at her the more disgusted I felt. At dessert she took off her Phrygian cap and taking out a boxwood comb that was stuck into the crown of her head she addressed herself with the calmest insolence imaginable to the ignoble occupation of combing her hair.

“ I could stand it no longer.

“ ‘Citoyenne,’ I exclaimed, looking her straight in the face, ‘be so kind as to tell me where you learnt manners.’

“ Soubrany quietly laid a hand on my arm.

“ ‘I’m not afraid of anybody here,’ I went on. ‘The Republic will think twice before sending a soldier who loves and fights for her to the guillotine. Moreover, I wear a sword, and I promise I’ll slash the face of anyone who is so ill advised as to denounce me.’

“ Projean, who had been doing the honours of the dinner, immediately gave the signal to rise. The fat woman had been staring at me open-mouthed, holding her comb in the air and gazing at me with a dazed look in her eyes. Then from her greasy lips issued these words :

“ ‘Aristocrat! Go away!’

“ Then she decided to raise her massive bulk from her chair. Soubbrany and some others pulled me away, conjuring me to be calm, to listen to reason.”

This Sans-Gêne showed no little attachment for Sans-Gêne, for not long afterwards she prevailed on him to save from the guillotine a soldier who had assaulted his officer.

It was about this time, Thérèse being still at Perpignan, that the Committee of Public Safety issued a decree forbidding any woman to remain in the army. The officers of the Armée des Pyrénées-Orientales made a fervent protest in Sans-Gêne’s favour. The Committee consented to make an exception in her case, and Thérèse remained a soldier.

The winter of 1794 finds Thérèse and her companions in Spain, marching along the highways of Catalonia, singing the “Marseillaise.”

The Spanish General, La Hunion, having entrenched himself in Figueras, the French proceeded to dislodge him. Unhappily, in this operation they lost their leader, Dugommier.

The siege of Figueras lasted nine days. Terror had got hold of the Spaniards. Thérèse was the first to enter the town and was the witness of some revolting scenes of pillage.

On one occasion a hussar who was prowling about leading his horse by the bridle called on her to go with him up a lonely street, and there drew from beneath his cloak a parcel which Sans-Gêne thought had a suspicious look about it.

“ Sans-Gêne,” said the man, “ I will go halves if you like in what I’ve got here. You are a prime favourite

with the officers. Just take charge of this till we get our liberty given us. No one will molest you."

"What's inside it?"

"No end of things, and a whole clockmaker's shop into the bargain. It's a contribution of watches I've collected from four or five streets."

"Ah! Good!"

And Thérèse, whose heart was as kind as her instincts were honest, ran her lance into the parcel which forthwith discharged the whole of its contents into the gutter.

"That'll teach you to take me for a looter," she added.

A little while afterwards some Spanish troops, horse and foot, were falling back in disorder along the highway to Gironna. Some scouts, among them Sans-Gêne, were chasing them, keeping up a running fire, while at the same time two French columns were endeavouring to cut off their retreat. From time to time the Spanish horsemen swung round in their saddles and fired at the pursuing Republicans. All of a sudden, Thérèse perceived that the people in front of her were not Spaniards at all, but French *émigrés* in Spanish uniform. Straightway she interceded with her comrades to give the poor devils a chance, and, hurrying on towards them, cried out :

"Get away, get away as fast as you can. Get away round the back of that hill. Our right column is barring the road in front of you."

Hearing this, they all made off at the gallop, except one solitary man, who continued his route quite undisturbed.

Thérèse rushed towards him. He turned and faced her, "A dark, handsome, young man, with a melancholy but determined expression." He took aim at Thérèse with his carbine and fired ; she replied by plunging her

sword into his throat, and then made her horse trample over his body.

That same night Thérèse conducted a family of Spaniards who had been taken among the fugitives into the presence of General Augereau, who warmly congratulated her, and presented her with a pistol, saying :

“ *Citoyenne*, take this in memory of d'Augereau, who will not forget little *Sans-Gêne*.”

A month went by and the French troops were falling back in disorder beyond the line of the Fluvia. Thérèse, crossing a piece of ground where fighting had taken place a few hours previously, found General Noguez there, seriously wounded. She lifted him on to her own horse and led him away to the French headquarters. Next day she saved the lives of two soldiers who, in trying to get across a torrent, had lost their footing and were drowning.

The Spanish, despite the fact that they had met with some success, were beginning to grow weary of the war. Thus it came about that the two armies began to negotiate for a truce. A Republican Adjutant-General was sent to the Spanish camp to arrange terms, and *Sans-Gêne* accompanied him. They had a wonderful reception and the *capitans* showered the most gallant attentions on the *señorita-dragon*. Their mission accomplished, the two diplomats were about to depart, when a whole host of Spanish ladies arrived on the scene, full of the idea of getting up a dance in honour of their French visitors. The Adjutant-General, however, would not hear of such a thing.

“ I told him,” said Thérèse, “ that I should rebel, straight away. He could go off, if he wanted to, but I had made up my mind to go over to the enemy, bag

and baggage, rather than miss such a fine opportunity for a dance."

The officer suffered himself to be persuaded, and consented to prolong his stay.

A dandified Spanish colonel presented Sans-Gêne with a pair of white silk gloves with a likeness in silver embroidered thereon. The officer said that it was supposed to be a portrait of the *señorita-dragon*.

Whilst the fair Spanish ladies (they were not all in the secret of Sans-Gêne's sex) were overwhelming her with attention, the Adjutant-General himself began to be conscious of the tenderest emotions towards his "lieutenant."

"My superior officer was not content with the respect and obedience which I owed him as a dragoon. For a long time he had been imploring me to bind myself by an oath to be taken before a municipal magistrate that I would render him duty and affection for the rest of my life, assuring me that I should find the yoke of the gentlest."

But our heroine did not see herself in petticoats. The idea of playing a mother's rôle did not appeal to her at all. So for a long time she turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. But the officer insisted, swearing that Sans-Gêne should *remain a man and retain her rank*.

At length Thérèse agreed.

"Special service took him back to France, and we set out together. The wedding was to take place at Perpignan. Marriage in those days did not require the elaborate preparations that are now the rule. To get together my trousseau and arrange my toilet was a very brief task. I said to myself that a uniform collar fastened with a brooch under the chin would have quite as chaste

an effect as the low-necked dress usually worn by brides. The helmet with its horsehair plume was a glorious emblem that reminded one of Minerva, and so of wisdom. It was at least as reliable and far better able to stand the weather than the very much overdone veil and orange-blossom.

“ Now marriage is a serious undertaking for any girl. Not the sort of thing she ought to rush into blindly. I hardly slept a wink the night before my own was to come off. I was going to swear away my freedom for good and all. That’s what it came to. The little dragoon, the spoilt darling of the regiment, allowed to do whatever his fancy prompted—it would be good-bye to all that. I should have my husband’s rank. I should be the ‘Citoyenne adjutante-générale.’ And then there would be all the boredom of etiquette. I should be always having to mind my p’s and q’s, always pulling a grave face. My husband would, likely enough, have a jealous fit and start playing the tyrant. Then there would be rows and squabbles without end. I began to feel thoroughly scared. Just for a moment, too, I began to think of the games I used to play as a child. And I thought too of my little playmate Clément, and the day when we made our First Communion together, and he said I looked as lovely as a bride. So my poor brain went on turning things over and over till morning broke.

“ All the time I was getting ready, trying to titivate myself and listening to my uncle’s final words of advice, my head felt heavy, and burning, yet somehow quite empty. The Adjutant-General arrived and said it was time to be off to the town hall. I could not suppress a sigh. It somehow seemed to me that everything had

been arranged with remarkable rapidity. Our witnesses and the numerous friends about me seemed horribly like the members of a procession about to conduct the victim to the slaughter. When we got to the hall, where the municipal official was awaiting us, I thought the seats looked grimy and the walls horribly bare: a strange squeamishness for a bride accustomed to the amenities of barrack-room life. But, then, find me a bride that is not fidgety about such things. The official person was an ill-dressed, underbred-looking specimen, with one of those faces the mere sight of which is enough to turn your stomach."

Bride and bridegroom advanced and took their stand before him. Both were young, and both were dressed alike, in every detail: uniform coat, white waistcoat, white breeches, silk stockings, silver buckles on their shoes. Each wore a sword, and under the arm carried a shining helmet. The official person had been used to some variety, some difference, between the parties that presented themselves before him.

"The complete identity in our appearance caused him considerable astonishment. He deemed that the situation demanded a jest, and no ordinary one at that. So turning to me, and looking me straight in the face, he said :

"'Now, before we begin, I should like to know which of the two citizens here present is the bride.'

"Everybody burst out laughing.

"I felt myself grow white with rage. I felt very much like giving the offensive gentleman one in the face. Meanwhile, my intended, though he had controlled himself to begin with, at last joined in the general hilarity. He therefore became the target of my wrath.

I told him he could laugh his bellyful, but that I wasn't going to be his wife. I had come there, I said, very much against the grain, but anyhow it was all over now. So saying, I turned quickly on my heels, strode through the door, and out into the street."

All this while the wedding-guests were rocking with laughter and the bridegroom was vainly trying to hide his discomfiture. Meanwhile Sans-Gêne in her white breeches and silk stockings was galloping as hard as her horse would carry her along the road to Narbonne.

At Narbonne she craved sanctuary from certain nuns who honoured her with their friendship.

This escapade, which looked like a desertion, made it necessary for the said sisters to intercede with Sans-Gêne's colonel. Matters turned out satisfactorily, for the intended bridegroom, having committed several minor peccadilloes, had been shut up in prison at Perpignan, and so, for the time being, our heroine was free from his importunities.

As a matter of fact, his uncle, who was a general, looked with unfavourable eye on the projected marriage with Sans-Gêne and took the first chance that offered of putting his nephew under lock and key.

This at all events was what Sans-Gêne herself believed, until the day when the uncle came armed with a bouquet of flowers to solicit her hand and heart for himself.

"To cool his ardour," she said, "I had to fling the contents of the boiling teapot in his crimson, chaw-bacon old face."

Having escaped from the toils of matrimony, Sans-Gêne proceeded to prove herself one of the most lovable rogues in the whole Republican army.

Being shut up, on one occasion, in the police station,

she set fire to the prison mattresses. You ask what put her in such a desperate rage ? Well, it was because she was incarcerated on the very night that the Inspector-General's wife was giving one of the most brilliant balls of the season. The guards rushed in, dragged Thérèse off and put her in the attic of a certain house that was being used as a store for fodder. There she found some strips of leather and bits of rope, which she pieced together and managed to slide down into the street, nearly dropping on to the sentry's very back.

“Stop her ! Stop her !” shouted the man.

She gained her lodgings, donned her dancing-shoes and appeared in the ball-room. As it was still early, the mistress of the house had only a few guests with her. Thérèse tells her story, and, pleading the honour of the sex, implores the united protection of the ladies present against her own Colonel. Being greatly in favour with the fair dames of Perpignan, for she partnered not only the pretty girls, but the plain and the withered as well, they promise to come to the rescue.

While waiting for the Colonel to put in an appearance, Sans-Gêne hides herself behind a settle. No sooner does the officer appear than all the ladies begin their intercessions. But he won't listen to a word.

“You don't know the things she's done,” he answered sharply ; “she's set a house on fire.”

“Anyhow, if she were here ready to take her place in the *cotillon*, you'd never make me send her home now, would you ?”

“Ah, that's a different thing,” answered the Colonel ; “but this time I've put her somewhere from which I wager she won't escape.”

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when

Sans-Gêne stood up in front of him, taut and trim, spick and span, and then proceeded, with great gallantry, to kiss the hand of her fair advocate.

“Mon Colonel,” says she, “it’s she whom I’ve got to thank ; or rather, wait a minute ; I harbour no malice, I think ’tis the pair of you. After I’ve had the honour of dancing with the Citoyenne, I will, if you wish it, Citoyen General, confer on you the honour of dancing with me.”

“Next day a grand review was to take place in the presence of the Inspector-General, to be followed by some manœuvres. The Colonel, who had made up his mind to punish my delinquencies, gave orders that another dragoon should ride my horse, for I was not to take part in the review. This was humiliating. The regiment rode out of the town. I went into the stables and found only one horse there, and that was the horse used for giving recruits their first riding-lesson : a terribly broken-down, decrepit old hack. The trooper on duty at the stables was a lout who was made a butt of by the whole company. Going up to him, I said : ‘You’ll either do as I tell you, word for word, or you’ll measure swords with me.’

“I told him to get hold of the clippers and clip the beast’s mane and tail till they hadn’t got a hair left on them. That done I mounted the sorry creature in my parade uniform and made my way to the scene of the display, where I found my regiment drawn up motionless in the field.

“All at once the Colonel, who was close by the Inspector, facing the line of troops, heard a confused murmur and noticed some agitation among the men’s helmets in the second row of the front squadron. The

noise increasing, the officer decided to go and investigate. Digging both spurs into his horse's flanks, he rode over.

" 'What's all this noise about? Eight days' arrest for the officer in charge.'

" 'Good Lord, sir,' ventured a young lieutenant, nearly doubled up in his saddle. 'Good Lord, sir, just you come along here and have a look for yourself.' "

And he pointed his finger in the direction of Sans-Gêne.

" At last the Inspector himself rode over and looked. I told him how I had been cut to the quick by the punishment which the Colonel had thought fit to inflict upon me, and I pleaded with him that he should give me a month in the cells, but that my horse should be restored to me for the review and that I should be allowed to resume my place in the ranks.

" I did not get my horse. The Colonel would not give way on that point, but he ordered one of the troopers forming the Inspector's escort to dismount, and I was able to discard the horrible apology for a horse on which I was perched.

" Then the regiment went through their drill. As you can imagine, I did my utmost to shine. I've since been told that the Inspector tried hard to trace me out among the rest, and that the Colonel, in bluff, affectionate tones, kept saying to him: 'Look at that, look how well he rides; there's no one can beat him. And he never jibs when it's a case of riding into the thick of the fight. He's a demon, by God he is!'"

Shortly afterwards Thérèse set out for Burgundy to go and let Grandpapa Viart see what his granddaughter the dragoon was like.

On her way through Narbonne, a woman who was in

prison there asked leave to see her. It was *la belle Lyonnaise*.

During the years IV and V we fall in again with Thérèse in Italy, doing garrison duty in a fortress in Milanese territory, but not playing any rôle of distinction on the field of battle.

Next year (year VI) she entered Berne with the 15th Regiment of Dragoons, which was almost immediately sent from Switzerland to Marseilles and thence to Egypt. But, despite her fervent supplications, Sans-Gêne was not permitted to accompany Bonaparte, and had to resign herself to staying behind in the regimental *dépôt* at Marseilles. Drafted to the 9th Battalion, she was sent first to Milan, then to Lodi, and took part in the campaigns which led to the evacuation of Italy.

On the 31st October 1799 she was attached to General Davin's army, which, being hard pressed by the Austrians, was compelled to fall back in the direction of Busca. As she was going along she picked up a wounded man who had been left to his fate, and, not finding anyone to tend him at the hospital at Busca, decided to nurse him herself. But the French being obliged to hasten their retreat, Thérèse and her wounded protégé suddenly found themselves alone in Busca just when the Austrian troops were making their way into the town ; Sans-Gêne was taken off to the Austrian headquarters, which had been installed in the house of a gentleman of Piedmont, the Count of Busca, who secretly favoured the French and had already, on one or two occasions, invited our heroine to his house to dinner.

Contriving to elude the vigilance of the sentry who had charge of her, Thérèse made a sudden dash into the Count's room and begged for sanctuary. Belino di

Busca's house was a vast one. Before her Austrian pursuers could overtake her, Thérèse was hurried by her host into the Countess's bedchamber and hastily attired in woman's clothes.

"The Countess stuck a bonnet on my head; the Count bundled up my uniform and flung it into a cupboard. The children's tutor, a person in ecclesiastical attire, unfolded a woman's chemise and helped me on with it. On the way downstairs I could not resist the temptation of having a look at myself in the glass. We had only forgotten one thing, and that was to wash my face, which was all begrimed with smoke from the cartridges that had been fired off that morning."

With great calmness, the Count told the Austrians that he had certainly noticed a young French soldier flying for all he was worth along the corridors of his apartments, but that he didn't know at all what had become of him. He adroitly put the soldiers on a false scent. It led them to a spot outside the town, which the French were still sweeping with grapeshot. By the time evening came the Austrians had quite made up their minds that Sans-Gêne had managed to rejoin her comrades.

Thérèse spent that day trying to get used to her new state, and so well did she succeed that she thought all danger was past. Alas, she was soon to have proof that her position was anything but secure.

"At dinner I took my place beside the Count, having sworn to keep my mouth shut.

"Every one was as charming, witty and gallant as could be. I sat looking as glum as possible, by way of protest. The Countess was courteous but grave. The men all began talking the usual political claptrap as hard

as they could, and began bragging about the rough handling they had given the soldiers of the Republican army. 'They'd cut the swine to pieces,' they proclaimed, 'and bring France to her senses again.'

"I could contain myself no longer.

"'Big words off weak stomachs!' said I. 'You talk like that because you feel you've got Europe at the back of you.'

"And turning to the French *émigrés*, who had all got on the Austrian uniform, I shouted :

"'Curs! Look at them. They're the wretches who fight against their own country. The Republic doesn't care a damn for you, or Europe either. I'm only a woman, but give me a sword and, if there's one among you less of a coward than the others, I'll teach him a lesson.'

"The *émigrés* looked at each other in amazement. The Count changed countenance, the tutor started trembling in every limb ; the Countess began to explain matters. . . .

"'Yes, messieurs,' I went on, flinging my bonnet to the devil. 'In me you behold a Frenchwoman, a citoyenne, and, what is more, a dragoon in the Republican army. I'm not afraid to say so. But if you've got any decency about you, you'll have some regard for those in whose house I am. They only saw in me a woman imploring their protection. It was a woman they thought they were sheltering, not a soldier. I should never forgive myself, all my life long, for being so rash as to seek refuge in their house, if it were to get them into the slightest trouble.'

"The *émigrés* behaved marvellously well. They made me tell my story and toasted me again and again."

Two days later, thanks to the confusion which prevailed at the Austrian headquarters, where, as a result of a counter-attack by the French, preparations were being made to evacuate the position, Thérèse jumped on a horse saddled for a woman and dashed away, with a sack containing her helmet and her uniform under her arm.

It was a dangerous game to play. If she had been caught, she might have been taken for a spy and shot. In spite of her woman's clothes, she presented such a martial appearance that the men at the French outposts, which she reached after some hours' hard going, covered her with their rifles.

At last she was taken before General Davin, who was in Dronero and manifested the greatest delight at seeing her. In merry mood, Sans-Gêne in her crinoline made several curtsies, pretending to imitate the ladies of the old *régime*. After which she resumed her uniform.

The morning after, Sans-Gêne's division had rather a hot time of it. General Davin entrusted her with a dispatch case containing all the divisional papers, telling her to keep as far away as she could from the fighting and making her responsible for the case he had put into her charge. But as soon as the guns began to speak, Thérèse forgot all about her General's injunctions and went and took her place in the fighting-line.

The affair turned out rather badly for the French. They were surrounded by the Austrians, and it looked very much as if they would be compelled to lay down their arms. However, they managed to recover themselves. As for Sans-Gêne, her horse was killed under her. She was unable to bring away the bag and all the papers of the division were lost.

“On the 13th Brumaire was fought the battle of

Savigliano. I was with a detachment at Cheraco. There were about a hundred of us there, mounted men, with about a thousand foot and only two guns to return the hellish fire of I don't know how many Austrian guns. That was one of the worst days of my life. In the morning a bullet hit my mare on the right flank and passing through her body, lodged itself like a curious sort of boss on the scabbard of my sword. I just had time to shake my feet free of the stirrups when the poor beast fell. Its blood was all over my boot and a piece of its intestine was clinging to my spur. I wept as I gazed at the poor creature lying stretched out on the ground. So there was I playing the difficult part of an unhorsed dragoon. The enemy's fire made a sort of semi-circle round about us.

“ I went and joined a group of three Generals (three of them, *parbleu* !) who were taking cover behind a little chapel. It was the only place out of the way of the Austrian fire. What a pity I have forgotten the name of the senior of those three Generals, or perhaps it's a good thing : the honour of the nation will be spared the shame of what I should have to tell.”

The General in question seems to have been one of those strange hidebound sort of military men of a species by no means extinct. The poor man, later on in the day when the Barkaw hussars and the Würtemberg dragoons appeared on the scene, rushed towards them thinking they were French reinforcements. When he saw his mistake he had no alternative but to cut and run, which he did, in company with all his staff. Meanwhile, Sans-Gêne, up to her waist in the mud of a stream, was slashed four times across the back and hooked like a fish by the Austrians. She was lugged off, with some other

Republican prisoners, to a little Piedmontese village, where the peasants robbed them of all their possessions.

“One of the wretches made it his duty to pull off my boots. I was soaked to the skin when they dragged me from the ditch. My boots and clothes had not had a chance to dry. It felt to me as if the brigand was tearing the skin off my legs. The pain thus inflicted added to the pain of my four wounds, was the most horrible I have ever had to endure. They left me standing in my bare feet, with nothing on but my breeches, waistcoat and shirt. I can’t make out how they came to forget my helmet.”

Together with some hundreds of other prisoners, Sans-Gêne passed the night under lock and key in a chapel. As ill luck would have it, the rumour had got abroad that the French had a woman-soldier amongst them. The peasants demanded that she should be given up to them so as to burn her for a witch. In order to save her, Thérèse’s comrades got her a tattered cloak, a wretched petticoat and a shawl to put over her head which they had borrowed from a *vivandière* who was likewise a prisoner, with the result that the bloodthirsty clodhoppers of the place only saw in her one of those red-kirtled camp-followers that commonly went about with the armies of the Republic.

For a long time Sans-Gêne refused to submit to the change. Her wounds were giving her such pain that death would have been welcome; then again, brave soldier that she was, she loathed to seek safety by putting on women’s clothes.

They saved her in spite of herself.

At Turin, Thérèse Figueur and her comrades were imprisoned in a convent. She had resumed her helmet,

and thanks to divers articles of attire bestowed on her by some other soldiers, she had got together a fairly presentable military uniform. The Archduke Charles of Austria, on his way through Turin, intimated a desire to see the French prisoners. Stopping in front of our heroine, he said :

“ You are very young to be a soldier, my young friend ; you’ve been unlucky, but never mind, peace will come some day and then you’ll go home to your people again.” And he gave her few pieces of silver.

It was also at Turin that Thérèse Figueur got to know one of the most brilliant figures of the eighteenth century : Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, who was the friend of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and who, while cursing the Revolution which had exiled him from his estates at Belœil in Belgium, still in his secret heart cherished his love of France and the French genius.

“ I found myself beside our *vivandière*, who was giving the breast to her little one, when a passer-by stopped and looked at her, and instead of expressing sorrow for the unhappy creature, began to sneer at her.

“ ‘ Another of Liberty’s goddesses,’ said he in French. ‘ How do you do, citoyenne goddess.’

“ The poor *vivandière* began to weep and made no reply. I looked up at the man and saw he was a Piedmontese whom I knew for a scurvy poltroon of a fellow, who, in the course of this war, had served with the French troops, and had recently deserted us to fight for the Austrians. I told him what I thought of him, in language of a strength and pungency which he richly deserved. Someone else who was passing stopped to listen to the quarrel. The Piedmontese, taken aback at my outburst, made himself scarce. The new-comer

then began a conversation with me. He asked me what part of France I came from. I told him Burgundy. He then told me he was a domestic in the service of the Prince de Ligne and that his master often spoke of Burgundy, where he had a number of friends and had often received a warm welcome. After putting some further questions he left me, asking me to wait there till he came back.

“ It was not long before he returned.

“ ‘ I have spoken to my master about you,’ he said, ‘ and to such good effect that I have got leave to take you to see him. Between ourselves, he is very fond of the French and would like to see the little prisoner who gave that great lout of a Piedmontese such a dressing down, more especially as he is a native of Burgundy.’ ”

The Prince de Ligne was quartered at the Palazzo Carignani. The kindhearted domestic led the little vagabond through a long suite of magnificent apartments till they came to a study where the prince, wearing a dressing-gown and cap of embroidered silk, was seated at a writing-desk.

“ The Prince began to chat with me about Burgundy and about the 9th Regiment of Dragoons, formerly the Lorraine Dragoons, in which his father had served as captain.

“ He inquired what service I had seen and displayed no little interest in the affairs of *le petit dragon*, Sans-Gêne. Emboldened by his kindness, I told him that I was a woman. He uttered a cry of amazement, sprang from his chair and hurried across to pull the bell. He gave orders that certain people should be summoned immediately, and soon the *salon* was filled with all the members of the Prince’s military household. Every time someone

fresh arrived, I had to begin my story all over again, and every time the Prince would say :

“ ‘ Did you ever hear the like of it ! A woman ! Well, it’s only those daredevil French people who would do a thing like that ! ’

“ When the general curiosity was allayed, the Prince remarked that I must have suffered dire hardships during my captivity. He had some food served to me on his own study table. Then he sent for a certain Comte de Vaux, a French *émigré*, who, finding the sword an insufficient source of income, had taken to the needle, and plied the profession of tailor.

“ The Comte took me and with his own hand measured me for a coat and breeches. A surgeon was called in to examine my wounds, which were beginning to scab over and now presented the appearance of great hummocks of flesh. After so many nights on the hard stone, there was nothing calculated to comfort me more than a rest between the sheets. I was conducted into a bedchamber hung with rich yellow damask, and a vast and splendid bed adorned with sumptuous curtains was placed at my disposal.

“ I felt a little shamefaced. My conscience began to war with the eagerness of my delight. Then I told the Prince in a whisper that my person was a prey to the two scourges that regularly afflict the unfortunate soldier, namely, lice and the itch, and that it would be a pity to quarter the whole garrison of them in such a lovely bed. The Prince laughed heartily at my scruples and told me not to worry. My conscience appeased by the confession I had the courage to make, I found it an unspeakable comfort to feel the touch of those soft white sheets and to sink luxuriously into the depth of that

downy softness. I slept for twenty hours without the slightest break.

“ When I woke up beneath the gilded ceilings of the Palazzo Carignani, I had good reason to congratulate myself on the punctuality of my tailor, Monsieur le Comte de Vaux. He handed me a jacket and breeches of good blue cloth which had just issued from his work-room. A pair of shoes and a supply of linen were also included in the gift. Moreover, in addition, the Prince made me a present of forty piastres.

“ I sallied forth to go and buy some bread and meat and took it to my comrades in the church who had not had the good fortune to be born, like me, in Burgundy, and to be born a woman.

“ The Prince de Ligne, being informed of the use to which I had put the half of his money, was good enough to set on this very ordinary action of mine a higher value than it deserved, and gave me another twenty piastres.

“ Whether I was to regain my liberty or not depended on an Austrian General of the name of Kens. The Prince gave me a letter to him, and another one for a captain of hussars who was in command of a detachment doing outpost duty at Perosa and who would probably be entrusted with the task of handing me over to the French outposts.

“ The Austrian General received me in the haughtiest possible manner and kept striding majestically up and down his apartment. Having perused the letter, he said in a gruff tone, without so much as glancing in my direction :

“ ‘ The Prince de Ligne is mad about these French people. He’s always got some Frenchman to whom he

wants to do a good turn. He wants me to have you exchanged. It can't be done.'

" 'General, if that is so, I beg you to have me shot.'

" 'Why ? '

" 'Because I'd sooner die than go back and rot on the flagstones of a church. You treat the unlucky people that fall into your hands too cruelly.'

" The General came to a halt, and looked me up and down.

" 'That's a strange way to talk. You're very young to say such things as that.'

" 'General, if I am young, I have read some old books, and I've noted one or two good points about humanity.'

" The General smiled.

" 'Very well,' said he as he dismissed me. ' You can report to the Prince de Ligne that I will do what he asks.'

" I was sent away in the direction of Perosa. The Prince, in his letter to the General, had abstained from informing him that I was a woman. I suppose he was afraid that the General's curiosity would lead him to delay my release over long ; or that if the thing were known some additional formalities might have to be fulfilled.

" He thought he could safely be more frank in his letter to the hussar captain, hoping, no doubt, that the latter would treat a woman with consideration.

" What happened was just the contrary. The captain tried to beguile me, and when that failed, attempted to obtain by force the favours which Saint Mary of Egypt is reported to have granted with such good grace to the ferryman.

" Just at that time I was anything but inclined for lovemaking, particularly with an Austrian, and an

Austrian belonging to the cursed regiment that had taken me prisoner for the first time."

The man did not forgive the disdain displayed towards him by Thérèse and had her very unceremoniously conducted to the French outposts. Hardly were they away from Perosa than Thérèse's guards flung themselves upon her, dragged off her stockings, her shoes, her clothes, and possessed themselves of all the money which the Prince de Ligne had given her.

Barefooted, in shirt and breeches, she was obliged to run behind them, keeping pace with the trot of their horses. Coming to a little river, also named Perosa, *pourparlers* began between the Austrian and French outposts, who were separated only by the stream that flowed between them, and fraternising in the most friendly manner during the truce between the two armies.

But it was in vain that the French outposts sounded their trumpets. The Republicans, being very busy sleeping, gave no sign of life. The Austrians' patience began to give out, and they began to talk of taking Thérèse back again. But the lady did not see things in this light at all, and in order to escape so unwelcome a fate, she rushed to the water's edge and leapt into the water.

Saving her skin by a miracle, Sans-Gêne next day succeeded in reaching her comrades, who gave her the warmest of welcomes.

She was given an infantryman's cap, a sorry pair of shoes and three francs in money, all they had in their possession, and Sans-Gêne set out for Briançon. Arriving there, she went to General Duchesme's quarters. He was mighty pleased to see her again. The conversation

which ensued between them was of a tragi-comic description, as we shall see from Thérèse's account of it.

"The General seemed highly delighted to see me again. I was much touched and began to tell him about all I had had to suffer at the hands of the Austrians. '*Parbleu !*' he exclaimed, breaking in on my first sentence, 'it's my lucky star that sends you here. As you come from Turin, perhaps you can give me some tidings of my horses and my servant. Have you seen them ? Were they captured ?' I told him I knew nothing about them, and once more began to pour forth an account of my trials and troubles. Again he interrupted me. 'My poor horses,' he exclaimed. 'Where are they now ? My horses ! My poor horses !'

"And that was all I could get out of him. His aide-de-camp displayed greater generosity. He gave me twelve francs and a shirt."

Thérèse had no better luck with the other officers of the district. All were pleased to see her, but did nothing to relieve her hardships. Finally she came across a gunner who gave her a complete outfit, and she managed to rejoin her regiment at Embrun.

However, Thérèse's health was considerably impaired. In the course of some local operations she had to swim across an icy river in the middle of January, and as a result had to be sent to hospital at Lons-le-Saunier, where a squadron of the 15th Regiment had a *dépôt*.

Thérèse Figueur was in very sorry plight when she arrived at Lons-le-Saunier. Indeed her condition seemed so grave that she was strongly advised to claim her discharge and a pension. Sans-Gêne, however, was very disinclined to resume civilian life, and she succeeded in obtaining an honorarium of 200 francs and several

months' leave, dating from the 28th October 1800. She selected Montélimar as the place in which to complete her convalescence. After spending several weeks there, she took up her quarters at Châlon-sur-Saône.

In June 1802 we find her back again in Paris applying for an increased pension ; but asking favours was not an occupation suited to the proud and independent spirit of Thérèse Figueur. She had now regained her health and considered that a helmet became her better than a mob-cap, and that, anyhow, twenty-eight was hardly the age to justify being put on the retired list. She therefore joined the 15th Regiment, which was then under the command of a young Corsican, a relation of the First Consul's. As a trooper in the 9th Dragoons, her Colonel had her dressed in a uniform of first-rate cloth, paid the rent of her quarters in the Quai des Ormes and assigned her a place at the lieutenants' table.

Thérèse now became quite a celebrated figure in Parisian society. Not a day passed but Sans-Gêne was invited somewhere to dinner. Madame Bonaparte desired her company at Saint-Cloud, and thither Thérèse went, accompanied by M. Denon, one of her most loyal friends.

“ Madame Bonaparte received me with that charm and gentle kindness which have endeared her to all who have had the honour to come into her presence.”

Thérèse was also anxious to meet Bonaparte. It will be remembered that the future Emperor had once had occasion to inflict punishment on her for some trifling dereliction of duty. But on this occasion the First Consul was not visible. Paying a second visit some time later to Madame Bonaparte, the latter remarked : “ What a lucky woman you are to be so courageous, and

not to be afraid of a horse nor yet of a cannon. Why, I'm frightened at anything and everything. It's no good arguing with myself ; the feeling is too strong for me. Why, here, in this very park, the First Consul would make me get up alongside him in a buggy which he drives himself. But when I was up in the air like that, I began to tremble all over. I pleaded with him, but he took a delight in going as close to the trees as he could. I bent my head as we went under the branches, shrieked with terror, shut my eyes and felt as if I were going to be killed. It very nearly brought on an illness. I'd give anything, my dear, to be brave like you. My husband couldn't say I was a coward then, and he'd let me go everywhere with him. I should accompany him on all his campaigns."

Thérèse has an interesting note on the impression with which she, as a woman-soldier looked upon the feminine toilet.

" Joséphine was sitting on a sofa with her daughter, Mademoiselle Hortense de Beauharnais. Joséphine was dressed in pink, her hair caught up by a comb of the simplest description. I'm not fond as a rule of women's dress, but hers struck me as an exception, so elegant, so natural it seemed, and in such good taste. Mademoiselle de Beauharnais was dressed in white."

But a presence still dearer to Thérèse's heart proved an invincible counter-attraction to these considerations of dress, and that was the presence of Bonaparte.

" The First Consul surveyed me with those extraordinary eyes of his that seemed to look you through and through ; to peer into the very depths of your soul. I had never felt afraid of anyone, but, upon my word, I felt a good deal less at ease with him than with my

own General. Of course the memory of what had happened and a certain feeling of remorse had something to do with my emotion. '*Eh bien, Monsieur Sans-Gêne*,' he said (he persisted in calling me 'Monsieur'), 'do you still think me as ugly as you did at the siege of Toulon ?'

"I blushed up to the ears. I should have liked to disappear under the table. Nevertheless, I managed to stammer out: 'Mon Général . . .'

"But without paying any heed to me he went on, addressing Joséphine: 'Do you know she called me a nigger. She said I was as yellow as my plume. She was furious and wanted me to fight a duel with her.'

"He took advantage of the situation to pay me back, and with interest, for all the chaff he had borne so nobly at the table of Dugommier, his then Commander-in-Chief. Joséphine and her daughter laughed till they cried. At length Joséphine, out of very compassion for me, attempted to stem the torrent of sarcasm that was being outpoured on my luckless head. 'Never mind,' she ventured. 'I've taken a liking to her, and I wish I were brave enough to have been in the position she was.' And her daughter added: 'If she had a bitter tongue in those days, she was at least a brave soldier.' And thereupon seeing that I had two advocates, and such charming ones too, I also spoke out. 'Since,' I said, 'the General has so good a memory, maybe he has not forgotten either that, at the siege of Toulon, I was able to bring up ammunition to the place where it was wanted.'

"Taking on a graver look, the First Consul spoke a few words in my praise. So imposing, so kind had his expression become, so incisive and rich his voice, that even now my blood surges within me as I think of it."

The words of praise mentioned by Sans-Gêne were summed up in this brief utterance: "Mademoiselle Figueur is a brave woman." Afterwards the First Consul suggested to Joséphine that she should take Thérèse into her service as a chambermaid. But our heroine, who by this time had swallowed several *petits verres*, coolly replied that she would only accept the position on the condition that she should be allowed to wear breeches.

Sans-Gêne's fortune seemed in a fair way to being made. Alas, her wayward temper was destined, in rather a singular manner, to nip her chances in the bud.

Thérèse began to find it unbearable that all the women in the establishment should look upon her like some strange kind of animal. Before long, everything about the Château de Saint-Cloud became odious to her, and one fine morning she ran away to Paris.

Now that she had resumed her place among her dragoons, Bonaparte would soon have forgiven Sans-Gêne for disdaining his offer of service.

On the publication of a regulation ordering all soldiers to discard their *ailes-de-pigeon* and their *cadenettes*, Thérèse had a momentary throw-back into her proper femininity at the idea of parting with her hair. She obstinately refused to go to the hairdresser's, and they had to resort to stratagem in order to get her hair cut.

From Paris, Thérèse went on garrison duty at Compiègne, where she was quartered in the Château de la Houssaye, at General Augereau's. Despite the strictly military character of her surroundings, there was no folly she did not commit. One day, when a grand reception was to be held, Madame Augereau took it into her head to make her put on women's clothes. Dressed in a

white gown, with a velvet toque trimmed with feathers on her head, she was introduced as a friend from the country.

None of the men present, who only knew Figueur the Dragoon, recognised Sans-Gêne. “ I proposed we should play ‘ John Oats,’ a game that suggested her father, Figueur the miller, and his calling. A great dish was brought in full of meal, and a bullet. I put the dish on a table and set the bullet in the middle of the dish. Then I said : ‘ Gentlemen, I wager none of you is clever enough to take up this bullet with his teeth without touching the meal.’ ”

“ In the *salon* were Generals Lannes, Masséna, Junod, Lefebvre and Noguez. They began arguing as to who should make the first attempt. The youngest of the brothers Gouvion-Saint-Cyr pushed every one out of the way and said he was going to have the first try. With his legs well apart, he leant over the table, then, both hands on the table, and his mouth wide open, he gradually bent farther and farther down towards the dish. Just as his teeth were touching the bullet, I gave his head a vigorous push downwards. You can picture the effect. He shot up with his face as white as a Pierrot’s mask, his eyes blinking, coughing and spluttering for all he was worth. As soon as he could utter a word he said : ‘ It’s that confounded Sans-Gêne. I recognise her now in spite of her toque. No one but she would have thought of such a trick ! ’ ”

From Compiègne the 9th Dragoons went into garrison at Strasburg. In September 1805, news was brought to Strasburg that war had been declared by Austria against Russia. Bavaria, which was in alliance with France, had been suddenly invaded by the Austrian army and the

Elector driven from his territory. So the Strasburg garrison set out anew in the direction of Würtemberg.

Thérèse entered Ulm with the advance troops, covered from head to foot with mud, her face all blackened with powder. There she fell in with Maréchal Augereau, her host at La Houssaye, with whom she had quarrelled.

“He recognised me, although I cut anything but a brilliant figure. ‘Well I never !’ he cried. ‘No, I’m not mistaken ; it *is* Sans-Gêne. But what can Sans-Gêne be doing here ?’

“‘*Pardieu*, Monsieur le Maréchal,’ I answered, ‘why shouldn’t I be here just as well as at Figueras ? One would think one couldn’t get killed without your protection.’

“He asked me to come and dine with him. He was lodging at the ‘Bull and Crown’ overlooking the Market Place. I refused. I even went one better. As I was pretty flush of money at the time, I went and called on his aides-de-camp, and, as a bit of bravado, I invited them to dine with *me* that same day, at an inn much less luxurious, it is true. They had the pluck to come, and Monsieur le Maréchal, I was afterwards told, was not a little mortified.”

At the battle of Austerlitz, General Baraguay d’Illiers decided that the older soldiers in the dragoon regiments should fight on foot. In spite of her many years’ service, Thérèse got leave to remain on horseback. “Our conduct,” she confesses, “was not what it might have been, and it was not due to us that the battle of Austerlitz was so glorious an event. Nevertheless the regiment had its losses, among them four officers.”

In Vienna, Thérèse comes across General Dupas, whom she had known at Saint-Cloud.

And then behold she falls in with Bernadotte, the future King of Sweden, who wanted her to remain with him and asked her Colonel if he would allow her to become a member of his staff. This was mighty pleasing to Sans-Gêne. But the affair did not seem to progress very rapidly. The days went by, and Thérèse was already beginning to despair when a messenger arrived to conduct her into the presence of General Bernadotte.

“ ‘ Do you know, my dear Sans-Gêne,’ said he, ‘ that I haven’t slept a wink all night ? ’

“ ‘ Maréchal, you’re overtired. This campaign has been a great strain upon you.’

“ ‘ No, it’s nothing to do with that. It’s you, *ma petite* Sans-Gêne ; it’s you who kept me from sleeping.’

“ ‘ Monsieur le Maréchal must be joking.’

“ ‘ Not a bit of it. I took a fancy to you from the first day I saw you. I didn’t say anything to you about it for lots of reasons, but, be frank with me, you saw well enough how the land lay, now didn’t you ? ’

“ I hung my head,” said Thérèse, “ and said nothing.”

“ ‘ Listen,’ began the Marshal again after a momentary silence. ‘ When I’m on campaign I must have the society of a woman, a friend. Madame la Maréchale, away in Paris, is nearly always ill. You see, it’s not a mere passing fancy. I will see you provided for.’ ”

As he spoke he tried to draw Thérèse towards him and endeavoured to kiss her. “ I freed myself without violence or anger, but I felt stunned, hurt, and filled with a profound sense of sorrow. The man’s countenance, so handsome, so dignified ; his uniform covered with gold lace, the great diamond star and the broad red ribbon on his breast . . . and then that he should hold me thus cheaply, I, who, like him, had fought on

the field of battle, sword in hand. A blush of shame mounted to my brow. I tried to speak, but could only utter a few incoherent words, and even they were interrupted by a sort of convulsive movement of my whole frame.

“ ‘A married man. . . . And I was so proud of all you had done for me. . . . So then it was not as a brave soldier that you thought of me. . . . You treat me like the most worthless of creatures.’ The humiliation, the mortification of the thing choked me. I could not go on.

“ The Marshal repented. ‘My dear Sans-Gêne,’ he cried, ‘I did not mean to hurt you. There, calm yourself. Look, take this. You are a good soldier, a brave dragoon, but for your comrades, for the wounded, for the poor, accept this money.’ ”

It was the 16th February 1806. That night Thérèse asked for a permit to return to France. Next day she set out.

In October of the same year we find Thérèse Figueur in Prussia. A few days later she is *en route* for Berlin. However, sustaining severe injuries as the result of a fall from her horse on arriving in the Prussian capital, Thérèse, after some months' inactivity, found herself not accompanying the army into Poland, as she had calculated, but obliged, yet once again, to take the road for France. On her arrival in Paris, she presented herself to Marshal Bessières, who refused to allow her to join her regiment at Versailles and sent her to convalesce with a family who kept a very popular dairy in the Rue de Bourgogne. Our heroine's health giving rise to great anxiety, the people with whom she was staying sent for the priest.

“ As luck would have it the priest in question, for all

his clerical attire, was a man who understood the military spirit, and this made me take to him at once. He himself had been a dragoon, had married, but having lost his wife and only child, had, at thirty years of age, embraced the ecclesiastical life. He received, or rather extracted, from me, my confession, gently, but nevertheless with great feeling. He truly loved God and his neighbour. He expressed himself in language that would have found its way to the heart, even in a barracks. When he had given me the Sacrament, he said, 'My daughter your soul is ready for the journey ; it only awaits the call. It is now prepared to meet its God. But still that is no reason to neglect the body. I know of no one, after God Himself, better able to effect your cure than the famous Dr. Boyer. Monsieur Boyer has no time to come and see a poor dragoon in his bedroom, and, besides that, to call in a doctor would be a ruinous expense for you. Take my advice and let them remove you to the infirmary. There you would be attended by M. Boyer every day and have nothing to pay, which is a thing worth considering.'

"I hated the idea of going to the infirmary ; nevertheless I agreed to the proposal. The priest played on my religious feelings, and that stirred me to humility of heart."

Eleven days later Thérèse was well enough to resume her military duties.

It was not, however, until the summer of 1809 that Thérèse was able to resume her rôle with the Imperial Forces. General Soulès sent her first to Bayonne to join the 13th Regiment of Voltiguers de la Garde, to which she had just been drafted. She therefore set out for Burgos, where she was engaged in a number of

expeditions designed to safeguard the communications with Valladolid and Vittoria. She also escorted mails, convoys of victuals and munitions which were continually being threatened by irregular forces under the command of the famous *curé* Merino. When at Burgos, she was quartered in the house of an abbé. "That worthy man conceived a friendship for me despite the hatred which the Spaniards entertained for us. He and his sister saw in me a woman, and that they considered a sufficient guarantee for their personal security. Their poor little house had been sacked and pillaged from top to bottom. In the society of these worthy folk, who had devoted their lives to good works, but whom Providence had bereft of everything save the will to perform them, I became conscious within me of the growth of those charitable instincts which nature has implanted in every feminine heart.

"I begged and prayed and did everything I could with my superiors to get the amplest rations of bread and meat. I was thus able to furnish the means of life to a brother and sister who had fallen into the most desperate straits. Beggars—God knows how many beggars there were in Burgos at that time—still kept coming to the *curé's* house for alms. I took up my position at a window on the ground floor, armed with a knife and a supply of bread, which I shared out amongst all comers. In this horrible war the victors suffered equally with the vanquished. We were not so short of victuals, but home-sickness, diphtheria, and typhus took cruel toll of our forces. The hospital was crammed to overflowing with our stricken men, and what a hospital. Great God! Rooms without any doors to them, not a pane left in the windows, no beds, no mattresses—nothing

but straw, a few sheets and filthy counterpanes. By God's good graces I kept free from disease and managed to keep fit enough to fulfil my duties as a Frenchwoman and a Christian, to lend aid to my fellow-countrymen, and bring succour to the afflicted."

Not long after this, in July 1812, when she was engaged in reconnaissance work outside the city, Thérèse suddenly heard a shout. "Halt there, you French dogs!" said the voice. She had fallen into the hands of Merino, the celebrated guerilla chieftain. The Spaniards made her mount a little wooded hill, showering on her insults and blows. All through the night they marched and marched till they came to a little village. There she encountered a Polish officer who had suffered a similar fate to her own.

"For the time being we were bound back to back and left to our reflections under the guard of a single sentry. When an hour had elapsed, a platoon came and drew up facing me. These men were not carrying their rifles slung over their shoulders like the others. One of them signed to us that the fatal moment had arrived. Some little distance away stood a great wooden cross. I begged leave to draw near it, that I might say my last prayer. They loosened my bonds, and I went and cast myself on my knees before it, after which I was brought back again to my former place. Then a man came up to me and, without a word, handed me a handkerchief folded into a bandage, a symbol that was altogether too eloquent. I should be telling a lie if I said that my feelings were anything but dreadful. It was indeed *un mauvais quart d'heure*. Those who have been through such things will bear me out. Nevertheless, as I still had some pride left, I flung away the handkerchief with a flourish and, despite the choking sensation in my throat,

I found strength to say: 'Do not kill me, for pity's sake, or if you are resolved to kill me, do it quickly. Do not prolong my agony.' As I was saying these words the man of the handkerchief had been scrutinising me with great attention.

"Why," he exclaimed, "if it isn't the soldier-maid, the one who was quartered at the *curé's* and was so kind to the poor!"

"My wife's for ever telling me about her," said another.

"Every day she gave a quarter of a loaf to my old dad," said a third.

"When bread was fetching a *duro* a loaf at Burgos, she used to give it away to the Spanish prisoners."

"A dramatic change came over the situation. Instead of bullets, I began to think I should be getting bouquets. But the feelings of race-hatred soon began to tell, and matters did not quite come up to my expectations. Nevertheless, they spared my life and it was decided that I should be conducted forthwith into the presence of the *curé* Merino."

While Thérèse was being led away in custody a volley rang out. The unhappy Polish officer had met his doom.

The portrait which Thérèse sketches for us of the redoubtable *curé* Merino is as romantic as it could well be. "He was rather under the middle height, stocky, broad-shouldered, black as a mole with a face and hands as hairy as any beast in a menagerie. The hair on his hands was so long that it came down over his nails. On his head was jauntily stuck a hat that had been captured from one of our hussars. I won't say he was handsome, and I won't say he was kind. Without compromising the reputation for cold-blooded cruelty on which he

jealously prided himself, I will merely say that, in my case at any rate, he laid aside his customary character. Indeed, his manner to me was almost benevolent. So far as I can remember, the village in which I was presented to this extremely formidable individual was called Barbadilla."

Merino, having decided to spare Thérèse Figueur, sent her away to be brought before a Junta, but the name of the town to which this particular Junta belonged Thérèse does not remember. Anyhow, it was a weary march and took three days. But the Junta having something else on its hands than to sit in judgment on a woman-soldier, sent her back again to the *curé* Merino, without inquiring into her case, much less passing judgment on it.

"Back again in the village where Merino had his quarters, I was billeted on the wife of a chemist who had discarded the pestle for the rifle. The inhabitants were kindness itself, and vied among themselves as to who should feed me—and feed me well. I should have preferred them to let me go, but on that point they were obdurate.

"Meantime I had got on the right side of a poor old man, who would have done anything for me. I prevailed on him to go to a place some distance off where there were some wounded men who were a long way from getting such good treatment as I was. Thanks to him, my compatriots were able to enjoy some sort of share in my good luck. Merino and his men only came now and again to the village. They were most of their time beating up the coverts, prowling about the village occupied by the French, and falling on any solitary stragglers they came across.

“When the prisoners thus captured became at all numerous, they made a batch of them and handed them over to Wellington’s army. The English undertook to send them to England.”

When Thérèse began anxiously asking Merino whether he was going to keep her long a prisoner, he replied that he meant to keep her in his own charge and, when the time came, send her back to France. That, he thought, could not be far off at the rate things were going. Wellington, in fact, had crossed the Douro, sweeping the French out of Valladolid and other cities, and investing Burgos.

But Thérèse, who had had more than enough of “Spanish brigands,” demanded in a manner that brooked no refusal, to be handed over, if not to the French, then at all events to the English. Merino assented and conducted her to a British outpost.

“I was handed over to the staff of a Scottish regiment, who shut me up in a barn with another prisoner, also French. The Scotch were besieging a fortress that commanded Burgos. Our barn was sufficiently near the scene of action to enable us to observe all the details of the attack.

“All this happened in the last fortnight of August 1812.

“Subsequently we were attached to a column of prisoners numbering about two hundred. They were good fellows, those Scotsmen, and loved their country far more dearly than one would have expected, seeing the remnants of barbarism which survive in their very primitive costume and in the shrill music of their bagpipes.”

Clearly when she spoke thus of barbarism, the good Thérèse was forgetting the hirsute headgear, the aprons

and other outlandish accoutrements of the Imperial army.

The Scots handed over their prisoners to the care of the Portuguese, who treated Thérèse and her companions a little worse than dogs, starving them and prodding them with their bayonets for fun.

Of the two hundred prisoners that set out from Burgos, not more than sixty ever got to Abrantes ; exhaustion and dysentery accounted for the rest.

At Abrantes the poor wretches were put afloat on the Tagus in the company of a number of Portuguese convicts, who showed them a good deal more kindness than the soldiers had done.

At Lisbon the French were marched through the streets, with shackles about their hands and feet, hooted by the populace, who pelted them with missiles.

Merino having made no mention of the fact that Thérèse was a woman, she was enabled to avoid a host of disagreeable incidents that might otherwise have befallen her on the journey. At Lisbon, owing to her rank as an officer, she was sent to the fortress and not to the floating prison to which the common soldiers were consigned.

“ It was hardly possible to be treated with less humanity than was meted out to us. We had to sleep rolled up in a miserable blanket on the stone floors without so much as a scrap of straw to lie on. All the food they gave us was what they called ‘ half rations,’ which consisted of about half a pound of rice without so much as a pinch of salt to it. Our sole cooking utensil was one can between five of us, in which we cooked our rice, and our only drink some foul water in a few tubs and buckets which the convicts were supposed to keep filled. We

used any bit of old potsherd or a wooden clog to dip out the water we required.

“Amongst our number were some Spanish civil servants and employees who had seen service in the Government of King Joseph. Many of them had their wives with them, and the unhappy women were terribly dismal and forlorn. I did my utmost to encourage them and keep up their spirits. The rats were a great trial. They ate and befouled our rice. In prison men are careless of their persons, but women never forgo the desire to adorn themselves. That is one of the things in which they like to display their superiority over the other sex. My uniform coat was in holes; I mended it with some cloth I got from two of the tails. My under-jacket was in excellent order. I told myself that a belt of fur all round it would make it look like a hussar’s pelisse. I saved and saved for weeks on the half-ration of rice until I got together about twelve French sous, with which I purchased a fur cap from an English soldier. Cut with strict regard to economy, it enabled me to give the desired finish to my pelisse. I had got three shirts, one of which I sacrificed to repair the other two and to make myself half-a-dozen collars. By similar means, I made myself a blue cloth cap with a broad band of gold lace round it. I washed my linen in a bucket, and ironed it by sitting on it. Anyhow, I managed somehow or other always to look decent.”

The prisoners were permitted to walk a few hours every day on a terrace overlooking the Tagus. One day a woman, most elegantly attired in a riding-habit, came up to the prisoners, and began talking to Thérèse. She said in bad French that she was sincerely sorry for her.

Our heroine greatly resented her remarks and told her

straight out to mind her own business and go to the devil.

But the other, with a gentle smile, informed her that she was an Italian, that her name was Carolina and that she was the *prima donna* at the Lisbon theatre. She had two brothers serving in the French army and was much taken up with the French.

Thérèse was mollified and told her her real sex. Next day, and every day thereafter, the singer sent a basketful of food which the *dragonne* shared with her comrades. Evidently Carolina had a good deal of interest with high and low, for she not only succeeded in very considerably mitigating the prisoners' lot, but, over and above that, contrived to take Thérèse with her to the ball. One night when Thérèse had remained dancing later than usual, a sentry rushed at her and gave her a drubbing. Sans-Gêne was hurt and fainted with the pain. Hearing the screams of Carolina, who had accompanied Sans-Gêne, the French prisoners rushed out of their casemates and assaulted the guard in charge. The affair ended with a lively exchange of fisticuffs.

Next day Thérèse was sent for by the Governor and appeared before him in the presence of Carolina. The Governor, a French *émigré*, spoke very kindly to her, and went so far as to compliment her on her heroic conduct under arms.

“Despite his flattering remarks about my bravery, he regretfully brought himself to tell me I must discard my male attire and dress as a woman. The regulations, he informed me, did not permit a woman to go dressed like a man. I told him I had been accustomed to wear uniform ever since I was a girl, since I was twenty ; it was useless. In vain too did Carolina add her prayers to

my lamentations. The Governor was inexorable. My final argument was that I hadn't the money to buy myself a dress. He said something about rigging me out in the clothes of some condemned women criminals. There was nothing for it but for Carolina to promise she would see about dressing me."

Now that Sans-Gêne's sex was a matter of official knowledge, Carolina imagined she had sufficient influence to obtain Thérèse's release. She was soon undeceived, for orders came along that all the prisoners were to be put on board ship and conveyed to Portsmouth.

Carolina was terribly grieved at having to bid farewell to the charming lad she had put into petticoats.

Five vessels were commissioned to convey the French prisoners to England. The crossing was supposed to take a week; in the event it took thirty-nine days. Two of the ships went down in a storm, a third foundered within sight of Madeira. When the tempest was at its height, Sans-Gêne displayed great coolness. One of her comrades went mad with terror and kept shouting all the time: "My gaiters, my gaiters; where are my gaiters? Sans-Gêne find me my gaiters. I can't stand up properly unless I have my gaiters."

"*Pardieu!*!" our heroine replied. "You'd do better to look out your nightcap, for we shall soon be sleeping the long sleep."

Arriving off Portsmouth, the two vessels that had weathered the storm were ordered to go a few miles farther on and land their passengers at Lymington. From Lymington, Thérèse was sent on to Bolderwood, where she was put on parole, together with four French officers.

"We were well treated, and allowed five shillings a

day. That seemed to us a lot. But you must bear in mind that living is very dear in England ; the means of transport are highly developed, and there is a fixed price for commodities which obtains more or less everywhere whether you live in town or country. A six-pound loaf cost us three shillings ; meat was a shilling a pound. The English pride themselves greatly on their meat, and so far as appearance goes it looks fine, with plenty of fat about it. But I found their enormous pieces of beef, their monstrous great legs of mutton, less tender and succulent than ours. The only thing in which they beat us is their beer. Every day I drank a good jugful, never grudging the eight pennies it cost me, that is about sixteen French sous. On this diet I soon began to fill out again. I boarded with a tailor who, for six shillings a week, let me a very clean little sitting-room. The bed was hidden away in a cupboard, and was only brought out at night.

“ I spent my days cultivating my bit of garden and roaming about the country looking for greenstuff for my rabbits.

“ You couldn’t find a man more jealous of his rights of ownership than the average English peasant. If I happened to stray merely a foot or two from the path, to get to some wretched tuft of grass, up would rush a furious individual clenching his teeth and shaking his fist in my face.

“ My property ! ” he would shout. I would let him shout, pretending not to understand, until I had taken as much as I wanted. Sometimes, when the fellow rather overdid it, I forgot I was wearing a petticoat and, letting fly an oath, showed him the point of my knife, which always had a salutary effect. The man invariably

stopped his clamours and beat a retreat. The English peasant is anything but pugnacious. They say the London crowds are prone to pick a quarrel, but then they have not been licked into shape like our people by obligatory service and a few years of army training. They're not afraid of a clenched fist, but they don't like the glint of naked steel.

“I agree with those who think Napoleon was quite right in wanting to land troops in England. I believe that our army, once it got a foothold, would not have met with a very prolonged resistance.”

We give these political and strategical views of Sans-Gêne with all reserve.

One of the prisoners, Tournefort by name, who only swore by the Emperor, had struck up a friendship with an *émigré* called de Caquére who had been living in England since 1790, and only swore by the King. One day M. de Caquére came with an English newspaper and read the following anecdote to his friend Tournefort :

“In the year 18.. three French officers were travelling by diligence from Châlon-sur-Saône to Paris. With them was a fat peasant-wench, a *cure's* servant, and another traveller apparently quite a young man, wearing a police cap and closely enveloped in his cloak like someone recovering from an illness. The officers began telling stories of such a nature as to make the servant blush, and she began to get very uncomfortable. The diminutive young man thereupon warmly took her part and, half in jest, half in earnest, contrived to keep the officers' merriment within bounds.

“On coming to a hill, the driver asked everyone to get down. The officers walked up in a group by themselves, the diminutive young man chatting with the

servant. Before long, the latter forsook him and allowed the officers to accost her.

“ ‘ That man in the policeman’s cap,’ she told them, ‘ is a woman. She has just let me into the secret. Well, I wasn’t going on talking to her—not likely ! A woman who dresses up in men’s clothes like that can’t be any better than she should be. It’s not very nice for a *curé*’s servant to have to walk with the likes of her.’ The *curé*’s servant had a strange idea of charity and a still stranger one of gratitude.

“ Resuming their places in the conveyance, the officers got more rowdy than ever. One of them began to tickle Thérèse’s lips, just as she was dropping off to sleep, with a long straw. She angrily thrust it away, and looking at him fixedly said : ‘ Are you mad ? Stop your fooling.’ He began again and she gave him a terrific slap in the face to make him mind his manners. Then, by way of punishment, the officer attempted to kiss her. Seeing that the secret of her sex was out, she called to the driver to stop, jumped out and flinging off her cape revealed a dragoon’s uniform. ‘ Monsieur,’ she said to her adversary, ‘ I am a woman, it is true, but I am also a soldier and a better one than you, for you have behaved like a scoundrel. I’m going to have it out with you here and now, before we go another step.’ The officer’s friends intervened. The offender himself looked rather sheepish and made a suitable apology to the little dragoon Sans-Gêne, for such is the *nom de guerre* of this young woman who has been serving in the army since the year 1793.”

Tournefort listened patiently to the recital of this piece of ancient history which had long been familiar to the whole French army. Then he said to M. de Caquétré :

“Would you like to make the acquaintance of Sans-Gêne, the Little Dragoon ?”

“What are you talking about ?”

“Anyhow, she's living here, at Bolderwood.”

“What's that ?”

“You saw her at my place a couple of days ago ; the woman who came to get some lettuce seed. That was Sans-Gêne in person. She has much ado to get used to the petticoats they've made her wear, and every morning, as she puts them on, her heart yearns for her uniform and her top-boots.”

Monsieur de Caquétré was for hurrying off then and there to her lodgings, but Tournefort restrained him.

“Well promise me,” said the *émigré*, “to bring her to Lymington one of these days. Ever since this article came out in the papers, our ladies have been talking of nothing else. They're all mad about her.”

Next day, as Sans-Gêne was going in, attired in what she called her “stable suit,” a basket on her arm, she saw a fine turn-out, coachman and footman in livery, “the whole thing brushed, polished and enamelled, shining as everything that has to do with horses and carriages always does shine in England,” and M. de Caquétré, alighting, informed her that he proposed to take her to Lymington to the house of a friend of his, a Mrs. Marchand, who was dying to make her acquaintance.

Sans-Gêne had scarcely time to change her dress, and soon she found herself in the presence of Mrs. Marchand, an Irish lady who had married an Englishman, and her daughters.

It was at Mrs. Marchand's that, a few days later, Sans-Gêne encountered the Comtesse de Salis, a *ci-devant* who employed her leisure in calling down curses on the

Revolution and all its works. The mere mention of Lafayette and Mirabeau would send her off into hysterics, and she always referred to the Emperor as M. Bonaparte. Sans-Gêne took an immediate dislike to this woman, but, out of regard for Mrs. Marchand, she so far restrained herself as to listen to her outbursts in silence.

One afternoon, however, when Madame de Salis was proclaiming that the day she got back to France she would have her tenants dragged at the tail of four horses, Sans-Gêne's rage boiled over and she found her tongue.

“ I wouldn’t be in the same room with that fury again for all the world. I love my country too well to allow anyone to say such things of it in my hearing.”

“ Your country ! ” answered Mrs. Marchand ; “ but you gave me to understand that you haven’t so much as an inch of land to your name there. What need have you to worry about France ? ”

“ Mistress, if every cow in France were to die, it’s true I shouldn’t inherit a single horn—yes, that’s true enough. But it’s none the less true that I couldn’t go on living if I did not think I should see my country again some day.”

Mrs. Marchand bore our heroine no malice for her outspoken protest.

After the downfall of Napoleon in 1814, the French prisoners in England were informed that they were free. Sans-Gêne would rather have owed her deliverance to a cause more glorious for the Emperor.

Thérèse, then, left England and disembarked at Roscoff, Cape Finistere, where her compatriots exploited her poverty in the most shameful manner. From Roscoff she went to Morlaix, and thence to Rennes.

At Rennes, Thérèse fell in with the Regiment of Light Horse belonging to the Imperial bodyguard. General Lefèvre-Desnouettes gave her quarters for a month and fitted her out in the uniform of one of his officers. "I put on the green undress surtout, cut in at the waist, and smart top-boots with tassels, and when I looked in the glass I told myself that, despite the fact that I was just on forty, I still looked a very presentable soldier."

This attire was only a whim on Thérèse's part, for she had given up all idea of going back to the army; and although her soldier's clothes delighted her beyond measure, she laid them aside for a long dress of the pattern then in vogue and one of those little Restoration hats that looked like horses' blinkers.

When Napoleon returned from Elba, Thérèse endeavoured to join him. On the 7th June, General Lefèvre-Desnouettes took her with him to the Tuileries. She had donned once more the uniform of the Imperial Light Horse. The Emperor was riding by on horseback. He had left the château and had just reached the entrance to the swing bridge, when Thérèse came to the salute and shouted: "*Vive l'Empereur!*!" Napoleon looked round and said: "So Madame Sans-Gêne has abandoned the Dragoons for the Light Horse?"

General Desnouettes then informed Napoleon that Sans-Gêne was just home again from England, where she had been long a prisoner.

"You let them catch you?" asked the Emperor.

"Alas, yes, mon Général!"

"And you've no money?"

"That is so, mon Général."

Napoleon turned to one of his aides-de-camp:

"Letart, give her a chit."

Then he went his way : the way that was to take him to Belgium, to Waterloo—and to Saint Helena.

Shortly after, news of the great disaster was received in Paris, and soon the enemy was at the gates. Thérèse hurried to headquarters asking to be enrolled in some corps or other, no matter what ; but her services were refused.

In the course of the battle that took place between Issy and Vanves, Thérèse went along to the Barrière de Vaugirard with a basket containing bread, a bottle of eau-de-vie, bandages and lint.

Her police cap and her military dress caused her to be put in the guard-room. She was suspected of being a deserter. However, she managed to make herself known and succeeded in reaching the field of battle.

“ It was the last battle-field I was ever on, and the first on which I did not appear as a soldier, but merely as an ambulance man. It was the first on which I had no feelings save compassion and sorrow, but, great God ! how bitter was that sorrow, and what tears I shed when I heard that Paris had surrendered.”

In 1815, Thérèse Figueur, having nothing to live on but her pension of two hundred francs a year, started an eating-house in partnership with a Madame Garnerin, opposite the barracks in the Rue Plumet.

One day the ex-soldier was cleaning her doorstep in her petticoat and an old pair of house-shoes, when a soldier of the Royal Guard stopped and spoke to her.

“ Excuse me,” he said, “ but you are astonishingly like someone I’ve not set eyes on for many years, but whom I’d give a lot to see again. The someone I mean was a young woman who served in the dragoons. During the rout of a convoy, between Burgos and Valladolid, I was

wounded. I was left in the road and should have fallen into the hands of the Spanish bandits had it not been for this young woman who hoisted me up on her horse and took me to hospital at Burgos. You can imagine how glad I should be to come across her again."

Thérèse, amusing herself for a time by playing on the man's uncertainty, at length avowed that she was the Little Dragoon, Sans-Gêne.

The man jumped for joy.

"I've just come into a little bit of money," he declared—"four thousand francs—and I want you to accept it in exchange for my life, which I should have lost had it not been for you."

Thérèse refused. Next day, the man brought his four thousand francs, which, despite Sans-Gêne's remonstrances, he insisted on leaving in the house. They nearly came to blows before her all-too-grateful protégé could be prevailed on to keep his legacy for himself.

It was about this time that Thérèse Figueur once more came across her childhood's companion, Clément Sutter, who, in many a field, had borne himself bravely for the Empire.

It was General d'Espinoy, commandant of the Paris garrison, under whom Thérèse herself had served in days gone by, who came to ask her hand on Sutter's behalf.

This is how he put it :

"One of my gendarmes has asked me a funny thing. He wants my permission to marry an ex-dragoon."

The ex-dragoon accepted the proposal with alacrity, and the general returned to report to Sutter.

"She's a kindhearted woman ; you must do your best to make her happy. But, I tell you what, my boy, you

must mind your p's and q's, for you won't be able to lead her by the nose ; I can tell you that ! ”

The marriage took place at the Mairie of the 15th *arrondissement*.

“ Once I had signed the register, I said good-bye to all ideas of independence. My sole thought was to make my husband happy. I made up my mind, as any soldier should, that there was no going back, and that it was my duty to give strict obedience to the orders of the leader I had chosen. The orders were never harsh. I had for a husband, the man I loved best, a brave, loyal, sober, steady man, with an even, gentle disposition, a man who adored me, and, what was not to be despised, a fine specimen of manhood, the handsomest member of the force. He had an open, good-looking countenance, he stood five foot two, with a fine broad chest glittering with the cross of the Legion of Honour and the medal of the Civic Guard, which he had won on the 15th August. Add to that, a calf so big that my waistband would only just go round it. And then, in addition to all that, a sergeant's epaulettes and General d'Espinoy's promise to exchange them soon for the epaulettes of a commissioned officer.”

Alas ! that promise never bore fruit. Clément Sutter died, and the ex-dragoon, falling into great poverty, had to go upon the parish and resign herself to waiting for her end in an almshouse.

Thérèse Figueur, *veuve* Sutter, ended her days in the “ Petits Ménages ” on the 4th January 1861.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME WOMEN-SOLDIERS

#### I

#### *Les Demoiselles de Fernig*

“ **W**HERE are their names on the marble tablets of our triumphal arches ? Where are their portraits at Versailles ? Where are their statues on our frontiers which they watered with their blood ? ”

In such language does Lamartine essay to call History’s attention to the exploits of the Demoiselles de Fernig.

Félicité and Théophile de Fernig were born at Mortagne near Valenciennes, the former in 1773, the latter in 1776. Louis Joseph de Fernig, their father, born on the 3rd October 1735, came of an Alsatian family. He had served with distinction in the Hanoverian campaign (1755-1762). Louis Joseph de Fernig, rating the things of the mind and the quiet enjoyment of his books at a higher value than military glory, had entered into friendly relations with Voltaire, who invited him to Ferney, and for a whole year found entertainment in his company ; whereafter the father of our heroines betook himself to Le Hénaut and there espoused a young girl of the district who, after giving birth to Félicité, Théophile and three other children, including one boy, left him a widower.

Administrator and registrar-general of the estates and demesnes of Mortagne, de Fernig, in addition to these

regular duties, took a lively interest in the literary and scientific activities of his time.

Then came the Revolution. De Fernig, appointed commandant of the Garde Nationale, maintained order until the time came for him to march his battalions to meet the foreign foe. It was then that Félicité and Théophile felt their warlike ardour stirring within them.

Their brother, who had volunteered for service in 1789 in the Garde Nationale of Valenciennes, had become attached successively to the army of the North and the army serving in Belgium. Félicité was now sixteen and Théophile thirteen. One night they put on men's clothes, possessed themselves of arms, and secretly joined the little body of troops under their father's command. For a time the latter was unaware of their presence, and little thought that among the soldiers told off for outpost duty his own daughters were included.

The members of the troops aided and abetted the young girls to deceive their father. When M. de Fernig returned home and saw his daughters modestly arrayed as country maids, he never dreamt that by night they took their places in the forefront of the firing-line.

But one day General de Beurnonville, who commanded a neighbouring detachment, hearing a loud fusillade, hurried with all speed to Valenciennes. On his way he fell in with the column of M. de Fernig, who was in a state of great excitement at an adventure that had just befallen him. This was what had happened. Only a few minutes before, his men had rescued him from a troop of hussars into whose hands he had fallen and by whom he was being taken off as a prisoner. After congratulating M. de Fernig, Beurnonville was anxious to

say a few words calculated to foment the patriotism of the soldiers.

“Beurnonville,” writes Lamartine, “seemed to notice that two of the youngest volunteers, hiding in the rear of their fellows, avoided his gaze and were stealing furtively from one group to another, so as to keep out of his way. Being at a loss to explain this timidity, he requested M. de Fernig to call up the courageous youngsters. The ranks stood apart and allowed the two young girls to come into full view; but their male attire, their faces besmirched as they were with smoke, and their lips blackened with the cartridges they had torn open with their teeth, rendered them unrecognisable even by their own father. M. de Fernig could not understand how it was he did not know these two members of his little army.

“Who are you?” he sternly demanded.

At these words the whole company began to exchange smiles and whispers.

Théophile and Félicité realising that their secret was out, fell on their knees, blushed and burst into tears, acknowledging their misdeeds, and, flinging their arms about their father’s knees, implored him to forgive the deceit they had practised upon him. M. de Fernig, himself in tears, embraced his daughters and presented them to Beurnonville, who described the whole scene in a dispatch which he sent to the Convention.”

And Lamartine adds :

“Tasso did not invent in his Clorinda a more heroic spirit, a more marvellous display of love and self-sacrifice than the Republic exhibited to the world in the destiny of these two dauntless heroines of liberty.”

It appears not improbable that M. de Lamartine

added a touch or two here and there to this moving story. M. de Lamartine was a poet. He does indeed allow that it was extraordinary that M. de Fernig, commanding so small a troop of gendarmes, should have been so long in discovering that his daughters had been disguising themselves as soldiers. But all that is of no great importance. The main thing is that the Demoiselles de Fernig did, in fact, make their military *début* in their father's detachment of the Garde Nationale.

Dumouriez, who had left the Ministry of War in order to proceed to Valenciennes, the headquarters of the Armée du Nord, was in command of the camp at Maulde, which was only a short distance away from Mortagne. This camp had just been attacked by a regiment of Uhlans. The volunteers and the troops of the line had repelled the assailants and the Demoiselles de Fernig, sword in hand, had astonished everybody by their courage and intrepidity.

Dumouriez, whose affairs were not in the best of postures, but who was by no means lacking in perspicacity, quickly perceived how he might turn these two young amazons to good account. They enjoyed the friendship of the troops and they were looked upon to some extent as two Joans of Arc. Dumouriez sent for them to come to his headquarters and appointed them his aides-de-camp. MM. de Fernig, the father and the son, were also given conspicuous positions on the staff.

Dumouriez took with him the four de Fernigs, father, son and two daughters, on the Argonne campaign, which ended with Valmy, Jemmapes and the conquest of Belgium.

“The elder girl, Félicité de Fernig,” M. de Lamartine continues, “rode with the Duc de Chartres and never

left him all through the battle. The younger, Théophile, held herself in readiness to convey to the aged General Ferrand, the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and to march at his side when the time came to attack the redoubts. Dumouriez displayed these two heroic girls to his men as models of patriotism and an augury of a glorious victory. Their youth and beauty reminded the army of those miraculous apparitions of tutelary spirits marching in the forefront of the troops on the day of battle. Liberty, no less than religion, was worthy of its miracles.

We next find the Demoiselles de Fernig taking part in the attack on Quaregnon, Anderlecht and Nerwinden—in all the engagements, in a word, which took place up to the 5th April 1793, which was the date of Dumouriez' defection. So great was their courage that it became legendary in the ranks of the Republican army.

At Jemmapes, Théophile, the younger, fighting beside General Ferrand, had supported the latter when his horse was shot under him. Then she flung herself, with a few *chasseurs*, on the Hungarians, dispatched two grenadiers with as many pistol shots, laid hold of the leader of the enemy battalion, disarmed and led him captive to her commandant. All this time Félicité, the elder sister, the bridle between her teeth, pistol in hand, was carrying on the fight just ahead of the Duc de Chartres.

At one moment it looked as if the centre of the French army was about to give way. The Duc de Chartres and the Duc de Montpensier, together with Félicité de Fernig, using their pistols freely, managed to force a passage. They battered their way through the opposing ranks and, giving full rein to their horses, the three young folk flung themselves on the centre of the retreating brigades.

“ Electrified at the voice of the young General, whose horse had just been hit by a shell-splinter, no less than at the sight of a young girl of sixteen braving every danger, the soldiers rallied round the Prince who, gathering together his broken forces, urged them forward anew, and himself dashed into the very midst of the fray. At one moment he seemed to be surrounded, but thanks to General Ferrand, who had followed hard upon his heels, he managed to extricate himself, and after heroic efforts put the Austrians to flight, who fleeing back in disorder, abandoned all their positions and left the field encumbered with their dead.”

The victory was complete.

Dumouriez visited the field of battle in company with our two heroines who laying all their soldiers’ bravery aside, fell a-weeping, like the two kind-hearted girls they were, as they surveyed the scene of desolation, on every hand corpses ripped open, and wounded men in the throes of death.

Dumouriez had entered Mons and Brussels.

However, the pursuing French and the fleeing Austrians were still carrying on some spirited skirmishes. One day Félicité was commissioned to convey a written message from Dumouriez to the outposts. Carried away by her ardour, and thus not as cautious as she should have been, she, and the little band of French hussars that were with her, suddenly found themselves surrounded by a strong detachment of Uhlans. They put up a stout resistance. Before long the Austrians seemed to be giving way. Félicité got free and put her horse to the gallop. She had not gone a hundred yards, however, when suddenly the girl reined in her steed to lend succour to an officer who was trying to escape from a band of Uhlans bent on

his undoing. The officer was wounded. The brave girl killed two of the Uhlans, drove off the rest, and then, leaping from her horse, lifted up the wounded man and bore him off to the field-hospital, and, without lingering an instant, galloped away to the General.

Vanderwallen, the interesting victim, although a Belgian, was fighting in the Republican ranks. Félicité did not know in the least who he was. Nursed back to health in the hospital of Brussels, the young officer, according to Lamartine, forgot his external wounds readily enough, but could not forget the internal one—the wound inflicted on his heart by the lovely amazon.

The sight of this womanly face enframed in military trappings rushing into the mêlée to snatch him from death, and then bending over him as he lay on his bed of pain, never ceased to haunt his memory.

As soon as he was cured, Vanderwallen left the service and started in search of the woman he could not forget.

Meantime the French army had suffered defeat at Nerwinden.

Dumouriez, who is portrayed for us as a vague, indecisive kind of person, being more richly endowed with personal ambitions and chivalrous ideas than with ideas properly so called, was accused by some of aspiring to a military dictatorship for his own aggrandisement; by others of manœuvring to create a constitutional monarchy with the Duc de Chartres as king; while yet another group, and the most powerful, charged him with having sold himself to the Central Powers.

Camus, Lamarque, Bancal, Quinette and Beurnonville, the Ministers of War, arrive one morning in the General's tent, and summon him to appear before the Legislative Council.

“They want my head,” exclaimed Dumouriez. “I’m not going to let them have it. I’ve played the part of Decius, but I’ll never be Curtius and I’m not going to throw myself into the flood.”

“Oh, well,” answered Beurnonville, “you are suspended from your duties. Your papers will be seized and you yourself arrested.”

“This is too much of a good thing. *A moi hussards!*”

We know the rest. The hussars rushed in and arrested the Commissioners, Beurnonville into the bargain, although he was an intimate friend of Dumouriez.

“I’m going to do you a real service,” Dumouriez calmly observed to his prisoners. “I’m going to rescue you from the Revolutionary Tribunal.”

They were conveyed to Tournai and there handed over to the Austrians as hostages.

Henceforth Dumouriez’ sole anxiety was to save his skin. The de Fernig ladies did not desert him in his hour of need. They made part of the little group that accompanied Dumouriez in his flight.

Hurrying onwards, with their pursuers, who kept firing, hot on their heels, Dumouriez and his friends reached the banks of the Scheldt, crossing it at Boucaud.

The de Fernig ladies knew this district perfectly. Nevertheless not all the speed with which they hurried on prevented them from losing six men and eight horses as well as Dumouriez’ baggage and his secret papers. Théophile de Fernig came within an ace of losing her life. Dumouriez’ horse having broken loose, she galloped back to face the pursuing troops, while, quick as lightning, Félicité, her sister, leapt to the ground and gave up her horse to the General. So promptly was this manœuvre carried out that it enabled Dumouriez to reach the enemy

lines unharmed. He then proceeded to Tournai, where he surrendered to Clairfayt the Austrian general.

The de Fernig ladies then hastened with the utmost speed into Holland. In the eyes of the Convention they were traitors, because they had gone off with Dumouriez : it was impossible therefore to go on living in France. On the other hand, they looked on the alternative of giving themselves up as prisoners to the Austrians as in the highest degree distasteful.

As soon as they reached Holland they at once resumed the dress and occupations of their sex. Unfortunately the Dutch Government considered it advisable, in its own interests, not to give hospitality to any persons, however commendable in other respects they might be, who were calculated to embroil them with the French Republic. The de Fernig ladies thereupon left Holland for Germany, where they vainly sought a refuge. None of the States would allow them to enter. So they went back to Holland, where they were arrested. Set at liberty shortly after, they took some tentative steps with a view of getting back to France, but nothing came of them. They were looked on as outlaws. A decree drawn up by Gossuin, a representative of the people, declared "that these young women had completely wiped out any service they had rendered in the plains of Champagne by their treasonable intercourse with the scoundrel Dumouriez."

In order to get back to France the de Fernig ladies had no alternative but to wait till a new Government came into power. The Directory refused them the longed-for permission, but the Consulate displayed more clemency.

From the time they put off their uniforms and put on petticoats, there is nothing of very striking interest to

record in the lives of the sisters. They got married, Félicité espousing Vanderwallen, whom she had rediscovered.

Nevertheless there are some charming passages in the letters of Théophile de Fernig, published by Honoré Bonhomme in 1873, which will deserve perusal.

It is interesting to note, in conclusion, how easily the two soldiers who for so many months had borne themselves with such manly heroism resumed the gentler characteristics of their sex. Indeed they threw themselves into the part with zest, displayed no small talent for coquetry, took great interest in the upbringing of their children, as well as in the making of preserves.

## II

*Angélique Brulon*

“ BRULON (Angélique Marie-Josèphe), sub-lieutenant at the Invalides; seven years’ service, seven campaigns and three wounds. Several times won distinction, especially in Corsica defending a position against the English, the 5 Prairial, year II.”

Such was the memorandum which accompanied the Cross of the Legion of Honour presented to the heroic Angélique Brulon, 15th August 1851.

The “Almanach Napoléonien” 1852, and, later, the “Almanach des Militaires Français” for 1853, published the following concerning Angélique Brulon: “Born 1771, an officer at the Invalides, who for the last fifty-two years, has enjoyed the veneration and esteem of all her old companions in arms. Veuve Brulon had been successively daughter, sister and wife of soldiers who died on

active service with the army in Italy. Her father served thirty-eight years without a break (from 1755-1793); her two brothers lost their lives on the battle-fields of Italy. Her husband died at Ajaccio in 1791, after seven years' service."

She was twenty-one when, in 1792, she joined the 42nd Regiment of Foot, in which her husband had died and in which her father was still serving; she immediately attracted attention by her conduct, which, both as a woman and a soldier, was so honourable that she was permitted to remain in the service notwithstanding her sex. She served for seven years, from 1792 to 1799, and went through seven campaigns under the *nom de guerre* of "Liberté" in the regiment which successively became the 83rd demi-brigade and the 57th of the Line, as fusilier, corporal, lance-corporal and sergeant-major.

On several occasions, and notably in the attack on Fort Gesco in Corsica, and at the siege of Calvi, she displayed a bravery and a courage that were truly heroic.

Among numerous, well-authenticated testimonies bearing witness to her brilliant services, we may quote the following :

"We, the undersigned, corporal and men of the detachment of the 42nd Regiment in garrison at Calvi, certify and bear witness that on the 5th Prairial of the year II, citoyenne Marie-Angélique Joséphine Duchemin, *veuve* Bralon, acting-sergeant, was in command at the attack on the Fort at Gesco, and that she fought with us with the courage of a heroine, that the Corsican rebels and the English having decided to charge, we were compelled to fight hand to hand, when she received a sword-cut on the right arm and, a moment later, a dagger-thrust on the left; that seeing we were running short of



ANGELIQUE BRUTON



ammunition at midnight, she set out, despite her wounds, for Calvi, a mile and a half away, where, with the zeal and courage of a true daughter of the Republic, she obtained the services of sixty women, whom she loaded up with munitions and led back herself, under an escort of four men, so enabling us to repel the enemy and retain possession of the fort, wherefore we have every reason to congratulate ourselves on her leadership.”

The signatures follow.

Subsequently, at the siege of Calvi, Angélique was working one of the guns when she was badly wounded in the left leg by a shell splinter. Being thus rendered unfit for service, she was admitted, on the 24th Brumaire, year VII, to the Hôtel des Invalides.

On the 2nd October 1822, at the instance of General de la Tour Maubourg, she was promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant. The order of the first division, which notifies the appointment, ran as follows :

“ Madame Brulon, a retired soldier, who had attained the rank of sergeant prior to her admission to the hospital, has, by the King’s good grace, been granted the honorary rank of sub-lieutenant, retired. She will be recognised as such on parade.

“ The Governor took immediate steps to promulgate the news of this additional favour accorded by His Majesty to one who, by her sound principles, her excellent sentiments and the respect in which she is held at the hospital, has shown herself worthy to receive it.

“ Signed : Marquis Victor de la Tour Maubourg.”

The brilliant deeds and irreproachable conduct of this extraordinary woman are attested by all the generals under whose command she served, and one of them, General Lecourbe de Saint-Michel, made special reference

to her in a letter which he addressed, on the 15 Frimaire, year IX, to Marshal Séurier, at that time Governor of the Invalides, and spoke of her as one who, by conduct worthy of the stronger sex, had proved her right to share in the distinction instituted as the reward of military valour.

“ Marshal Jérôme Bonaparte and General Randon concurred in this view and the proposals made by them in favour of the widow Bralon have been approved by the President of the Republic.”

The order conferring the rank of commissioned officer on Angélique Bralon was drawn up in the following terms :

“ On this second day of October in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, the King being in Paris and feeling a complete assurance in the valour, the good conduct and the fidelity of Dame Angélique Marie-Josèphe Duchemin, *veuve* Bralon, His Majesty has been pleased to confer upon her the honorary rank of sub-lieutenant, retired, this order to take effect as from the second day of October 1822, above mentioned ; and His Majesty commands his generals and other officers and all whom it may concern to recognise the said Dame Duchemin, *veuve* Bralon, as holding this rank.

“ By order of the King,

“ The Secretary of State for War :

“ Signed : de Bellune.”

In 1883 the Queen Mother of Spain and the Spanish princesses paid a visit to the tomb of Napoleon in the Invalides. Colonel Gérard thus records the incident :

“ At the entrance to the church, Her Majesty was received by the clergy of the hôtel, who accompanied her to the choir, where she spent some time in silent prayer, after which she was conducted to the dome.

"From there, the Queen proceeded to the officers' refectory, where dinner is served in the silver plate graciously presented to them by the Empress Marie-Louise. In this hall was present the Widow Brulon, attired in the uniform of an officer. The Governor presented her to the Queen, who was pleased to converse with her a little, and it was not without surprise that she listened to the strange story of her life as a soldier, learning how, after losing her husband on the field of battle, she had disguised her sex and enlisted in the army.

"In the year VII," adds Colonel Gérard, "she was admitted to the Invalides, where she has been living for fifty-four years wearing, with a merry heart, the sub-lieutenant's uniform on which the Emperor Napoleon III pinned the cross of the Legion of Honour which she had won on the battle-field."

Above the door of our heroine's room are inscribed the words :

"MADAME VEUVE BRULON  
OFFICIER."

Angélique Brulon, who was employed in the clothing department at the Invalides, died of low fever on the 13th July, 1889.

III

*"Breton Double"*

"BRETON DOUBLE" (the nickname given to Madame Poncet, *née* Ducaud Laborde) had, if all reports are true, adventures which are worthy of being handed down to

posterity. They are related in a brochure which came out in 1833 :

“ THE FEMALE HUSSAR, being the true story of the celebrated woman who, for seventeen years, served in the 6th Regiment of Hussars, was made quartermaster, and decorated by Napoleon with the cross of the Legion of Honour ; list of the battles in which she fought with distinction ; number of wounds received by her, etc.”

Such was the somewhat lengthy title of this brochure.

The narrative begins with an account of how, in the autumn of the year 1806, Breton Double made the acquaintance of Napoleon, who was holding a review of his troops on the Champ-de-Mars. Perceiving a hussar who was not drawn up with the rest, the Emperor shouted :

“ What is that man doing ? Why is he not in his place ? How comes it that in a regiment which I am pleased to hold up as a pattern I am called upon to witness such a breach of discipline ? Let that man be confined to the barracks for a week.”

“ Sire,” answered the Colonel, “ suffer me to appeal to Your Majesty to mitigate the severity of your decision, and to implore pardon for my volunteer. You will not withhold it when you have heard his story.”

“ Very well,” said the Emperor. “ Let him come here.”

The hussar came up at the gallop, and the following dialogue ensued :

“ Your name ? ”

“ Mon Empereur, my name is Ducaud Laborde : in the regiment I’m known as Breton Double.”

“ Why did you quit the ranks ? ”

"I was never in them. I have always gone about with the regiment as a volunteer, not wishing to become a member of it till Your Majesty should signify that I was worthy so to do."

"How long have you been attached to the regiment?"

"Eight years."

"What led you to join?"

"Love of my country and my husband, from whom I wished never to be separated."

"What, you are a woman?"

"I am, Sire, and never will you have in the regiment an arm more devoted to your service than is mine."

"What is your husband's name?"

"Poncet, Chief Quartermaster."

"What part of the country do you come from?"

"Angoulême."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-three."

"Have you any children?"

"Yes, Sire, one boy."

"What does he do?"

"He's a trumpeter in the 2nd Dragoons."

"Good! Do you know your drill?"

"Yes, Sire, and my sword-exercise too."

"I should like to see," said the Emperor, who had listened to Breton Double's answers with ever-increasing attention.

"Colonel, order up a platoon and let this brave Breton Double have a place in it."

Breton Double went through her paces. After a time the Emperor said:

"That will do. I'm satisfied. Breton Double, I make you Quartermaster Orderly."

Ere long Breton Double distinguished herself at the battle of Eylau, where, dashing forward, sword in hand, she slew the enemy captain, extricated the French soldiers and rode back to headquarters with the sash of the officer she had dispatched.

At Friedland, Breton Double sustained a deep sword-cut on the right thigh, but, heedless of the pain, she went on with the fight and was hit soon afterwards by a bullet under the right armpit. In spite of that she still stuck to her horse, stanching the blood with her cravat, binding up her wound and taking her sword in her left hand, she continued to press onward.

She took six Prussian prisoners and brought them to Napoleon, who took off his cross and pinned it on to her heroic breast.

That at all events is the story as told by the biographer —the possibly too indulgent biographer— of Breton Double, for the register of the Legion of Honour shows no record of the circumstance.

In 1815, at Waterloo, Breton Double had a leg shattered by a cannon ball. Her husband, now a captain, was killed alongside her. Taken prisoner, Breton Double was treated with great respect by the enemy and was led off the field by Colonel Barrown of the Royal Irish.

Breton Double returned to France in 1821 when everyone believed her dead.

Charles X took no notice of this heroic woman, who died in want in 1834—in want, but not without philosophy, for she used to say :

“ Well, if my luck’s down, my heart’s up.”

## CHAPTER III

### CHRISTINA, EX-QUEEN OF SWEDEN

**O**N the 16th June 1654, Christina abdicated the throne of Sweden. A free woman at last, she then set out for Denmark, accompanied by four Swedish gentlemen who had not the faintest idea of whither she was taking them. Her latest motto was *Fata viam invenient* ("Fate will find out the way").

The little group having arrived at the frontiers of Denmark, the Baron de Linde, in the name of his master, Charles Gustavus, offered her the hand of the new monarch. With great coldness Christina replied that had she desired to marry she would have done so when she was Queen, seeing that she was accustomed to make her own choice and not to have it made for her.

When at length she arrived in Denmark our heroine exclaimed : "Behold I am free at last, and far from a country to which I hope never to return." And forthwith, as though to demonstrate her independence, she abandoned the female, and adopted a male, attire. She took the name of Count Dohna. But the secret was soon divulged, and it is reported that the Queen of Denmark, having learnt that the *soi-disant* Count Dohna was journeying close to her château, disguised herself as a serving-woman in order to go and see the said Count in the inn where he was staying.

On the 10th July 1654, Christina reached Hamburg, where she put up at the house of her banker, a Jew named Texeira. She soon left Hamburg for Münster,

where she attracted the homage of a whole college of Jesuits. Thence she passed through Holland. At Deventer she proceeded to the abode of Professor Gronovius. She talked to him about his works, prevented him from going to bed, kept him discussing and arguing all night long, and left him at daybreak without taking a moment's rest herself.

At Antwerp the Count Dohna publicly announced that he was a woman, and the very same woman who, not long ago, had presided over the destinies of Sweden. Then resuming woman's garb once more, Christina received a visit from the Archduke Leopold, Governor-General of the Low Countries.

At Antwerp too she had fallen in with the Prince de Condé, but something in the disposition, or the temper, of these two individuals made their meeting anything but the cordial and affectionate encounter that might have been expected from the tone of the letters that had passed between them. Christina did not so much as ask the famous Marshal to visit her, nor did he put himself out in the least in order to see her. One day, however, he arranged to mingle with the crowd of people who thronged the apartment of the ex-Queen. He wanted to scrutinise the woman who had so lightly laid aside the crown, who thought so little of the prize for which he was fighting and which he had been pursuing all his life long without succeeding in grasping it.

Getting to hear that the Prince de Condé had visited her apartments without making his presence known, Christina sent him word the same day that she desired to meet him—officially this time. The interview duly took place.

“Cousin,” said Christina, “who would have believed

ten years ago that we two were destined to meet like this?"

The Prince did not answer, and waited till, of its own accord, the conversation took another turn.

The rumour began to take shape in Europe that Christina was going to change her religion, and the Swedish Senate sent to her at Antwerp the Count de Toff as a delegate. The latter made some very adroit representations to the Queen and also delivered some letters from the King recommanding his cousin to various European sovereigns. Christina was very annoyed both with the admonition and the letters of introduction, and publicly announced that she flattered herself that her own worth and the glories of her reign would serve her as a much better passport than the recommendations of an unknown prince.

And that was true enough, for no sooner did a Court—however great or small—learn that the ex-sovereign was journeying through its dominions, than steps were taken to seek her out and to welcome her in royal state.

On the 23rd December 1654, at the invitation of the Archduke Leopold, Christina made a public and sensational entry into Brussels. Next day she proceeded to the Archduke's offices, where she found the Archduke in the company of several Spanish nobles and a priest, Father Guemez. She then abjured her religion and declared herself a Catholic. Notwithstanding the fact that this abjuration was supposed to be regarded as secret, all the guns in the city were fired off as soon as the Queen had finished her confession and received absolution.

The abjuration was signed and dispatched forthwith to the Sovereign Pontiff.

Christina's conversion was the outcome of long and skilful preparations on the part of Pimentel, who, while Christina was still on the throne, brought numerous missionaries and Jesuits in disguise to Stockholm.

Some have averred that Descartes and Chanut, in collusion with Rome, were the principal instruments in bringing about this conversion. That is not so. The interviews between Descartes and the Queen had reference solely to philosophic and scientific questions. As for Chanut, the mere fact that he pleaded earnestly with Christina not to renounce the throne, debarred him from suggesting a conversion to Catholicism, since the Queen of Sweden was compelled to be a Protestant. But now this change was obviously necessary, for was it not her intention to reside henceforth exclusively in Catholic countries, and chiefly in Paris and Rome ? Moreover, she was under no obligation to give an account of herself at Stockholm, since, as she proclaimed to all the world, an abyss now sundered her from a nation where she henceforth counted for nothing.

One of Christina's historians has justly remarked that in neither communion was her faith marked by any deep sincerity, and that she treated Luther and Calvin with as much levity as the Fathers of the Church. But Christina was fond of splendour, and beheld in the Catholic religion those occasions for gorgeous ceremonial that Protestantism did not offer. There is no doubt that her thoughts had long since ceased to be occupied with questions of theology ; and here is a proof of it. One day, a book entitled "The Story of the Queen of Sweden's Conversion" fell into her hands. She read it carefully through and then wrote this note on the margin : "Whoever wrote this, knows nothing about

the matter, and she who does know has never written about it." When a Jesuit of Louvain told her she would certainly take her place among the great saints of Christendom, she calmly replied : " I would rather they put me with the sages."

Naturally, the Catholics made a great deal of the matter and Christina's conversion was everywhere greeted with fanfares. As for the Protestants, they charged the ex-Queen with insulting the memory of the deceased Gustavus Adolphus.

Mazarin in particular was delighted at her conversion and dispatched a troop of comedians to Brussels for the Queen's diversion.

Brussels ever was, and still is, one of the dullest cities on the Continent. Its inhabitants suffer from a total lack of wit and humour. Nevertheless, the city of Saint Michael experienced, during Christina's sojourn within its walls, a period of delirious excitement. Our heroine had none of the spiritual zeal of the neophyte. All she thought of was pleasure. " At last," she exclaimed in a letter to Mademoiselle de Sparre, " I need listen to no more sermons. I despise all orators. After what Solomon says, everything else is rubbish ; let everyone eat, drink and be merry."

The virtuous Swede was not a little shocked at such language from her one-time sovereign.

After amusing herself for several months in Brussels, Christina thought she would make for Italy. She wanted to establish herself in Rome, and this plan was warmly approved by the Pope.

At Innsbruck the Queen of Sweden was received by the Papal Nuncios and repeated her abjuration, this time publicly.

Christina then wrote to Charles Gustavus to tell him of her change of religion : “ I safely arrived here, where I have His Holiness’s leave and command to declare myself what I long have been. It gives me much happiness to obey him, and I have set this glory above that of reigning over the powerful States which now acknowledge your sway. You should approve my action since it profits you, and it has in no way changed my love for Sweden or the feelings of friendship I have always entertained for you.”

To the Pope she indited a long epistle : “ Having reached at last the bourne so long desired, of being received into the bosom of our Holy Catholic and Roman Church, it is my anxious desire to inform Your Holiness thereof and to thank you for honouring me with your benevolent commands. I have made it clear to the whole world that, to obey Your Holiness, I most gladly renounced a kingdom where veneration for you is regarded as among the irremediable sins ; and I have laid aside my title to earthly respect in order to prove that I set the glory of obeying you far above the most splendid throne in the world. I pray Your Holiness to receive me as I am, denuded of all the appurtenances of greatness, with the same paternal affection which you have been pleased to accord me hitherto.”

The Queen made her entry into the Papal States on the 21st November 1655. Four Nuncios awaited her, and handed her a brief expressing the Pope’s desire shortly to see her in Rome. On the 19th December she entered the Holy City by the “ Porta Pertusa, *incognito*,” in accordance with prescribed etiquette.

This incognito arrival was nevertheless very brilliant. A crowd, carrying torches, accompanied her to her

abode, and did not leave till they had given her several serenades.

Next day she sought an audience of the Pope and duly kissed hands. After this came her public entry into Rome.

The *cortège*, composed of a multitude of persons of all ranks, passed through the Porto del Popolo. Christina was dressed as an amazon and rode her horse man-fashion. Within the city, all the troops were under arms; triumphal arches, tapestries, festoons of flowers, adorned the way; groups of musicians, placed at regular intervals along the route, blazed forth their fanfares which, from time to time, were interrupted by salvos of artillery. The Roman dames, attired in their most splendid raiment, were seated in tiers. No effort was spared to heighten the brilliance of the *fête*, and you might have taken it for a representation of the triumph of those mighty conquerors of the world when they returned to the great city crowned with the laurels of victory. The procession made its way towards the Basilica of St. Peter. The higher clergy received the Queen at the gate of the sacred fane, and conducted her to the high altar, and thence to the Pope's chapel, where His Holiness administered to her the Sacrament of Confirmation. She added, on this occasion, the name of Alexandra to that of Christina.

Soon this remarkable woman, always strangely attired, partly as a man, partly as a woman, sometimes completely as a man, but never entirely as a woman, drew around her a host of inquisitive sympathisers. All the *salons* of Rome flung wide their doors to her, and she soon began to win all the hearts. She went to see the sights of the Holy City accompanied by two cardinals,

men of high literary accomplishments and insinuating address, who pandered to her every whim. One day, when Christina and her company were admiring one of the finest statues in Rome, the Queen cried: "Oh, la Bella Cosa!" whereupon the cardinals exclaimed: "Heaven be praised, Your Majesty admires the Truth, which persons of your rank so seldom care for."

The statue which the Queen was contemplating was the statue of Truth by Bernino. "Your Eminences are right," answered Christina calmly. "You see, not every truth is carved in marble."

However, she gave no small offence to the Romans by her habit of talking, or laughing aloud during Mass. Being informed of this, the Pope sent her a rosary and begged her to tell her beads when at Mass. She answered that she did not want to be "a bead-mumbling Catholic." Cardinal Colonna, whose only passion up to this time had been for the singers in the Sistine Chapel, suddenly began to show Christina a great deal of attention. No doubt it was her masculine attire that took his fancy.

The great Roman families, who had spared themselves no expense in welcoming Christina, made it clear, after a time, that they were not very pleased with Christina's treatment of them. When she was invited to a place, she would go or stay away as the fancy took her, and receive, or refuse to receive, influential people, according to the caprice of the moment. She openly made fun of Italian tastes and manners and, generally, behaved with the ignorant impertinence of a little Nordic queenling.

Nevertheless, when she had taken up her quarters at the Palazzo Farnese, she gathered all the intellectuals about her. On the 24th January 1656, she inaugurated an Academy of Moral Science and Literature.

And now, in order to please the Pope, she sent back to Brussels the Spanish gentlemen who had accompanied her to Rome and took some Italians into her service. Two of the Spaniards considered they had been treated shabbily and published a pamphlet in which they gave her short shrift. Before long there were rumours of a plot against her person, and Christina lodged, with the Pope, a plaint against her unknown enemy. Moreover, she tried to effect a *rapprochement* with France and, with that object, struck up a friendship with M. de Lyonne, Louis XIV's ambassador.

An epidemic having broken out in Rome, the Queen found herself with a good pretext for making her bow to the Pope and betaking herself across the Alps. Dressed in a man's riding-suit she made her way to Civita Vecchia and there took ship for France. On her arrival at Marseilles, in August 1656, she was received by the Duc de Guise, who had been entrusted with the duty of acting as her escort in her peregrinations about France. She arrived at Fontainebleau on the 4th September, where she at once struck up a friendship with Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Henry IV's granddaughter and a woman-soldier of the better sort.

The Court being desirous that Christina should make a state entry into Paris, dispatched to Conflans, where she had passed the night, more than sixteen thousand men of the Paris militia and ten thousand horse. Christina rode on her charger. She wore a hat trimmed with sable plumes, a man's gorget, a tunic heavily adorned with gold and silver lace—but no sword. When some astonishment was expressed at the coolness with which Christina regarded all this display in her honour she said: “Providence arranged that I should be born

surrounded on every hand with laurels and palms. I closed my eyes with their shadow protecting me and my earliest slumbers were adorned with trophies. All Sweden went on its knees and worshipped me in my cradle."

After that the Parisians took care not to ask Christina what she thought of things, when she did not volunteer to tell them.

Christina lost no time in having herself presented to the Académie Française. The speech of welcome was extremely eloquent.

"From your tenderest years Your Majesty might have surrounded yourself with everything calculated to pamper and seduce the soul. You did not do so. You closed your ears to the song of the Sirens and addressed yourself to the Study of Wisdom. How marvellous was the progress that you made. Suffer it, Madame, to be said, that if it be not for your own glory, it will lend an aureole to all our generation. The study of languages wherein we wear out our days and nights and consume the flower of our age, has been for you but as child's play. The literature of mankind has never a flower, never a fruit, which your royal hands have left unplucked. Nothing there is in the whole range of Science which your all-embracing mind has failed to grasp. You have succeeded in doing what it has been vouchsafed to few men to perform, and which no maiden or woman has ever dared to attempt, and all this you have accomplished almost on the threshold of your life, amid the pomp and ceremony of your Court, amid all the hindrances and distractions of the royal state."

Of all the speeches addressed to her, this was the one that touched her the most.

Ménage, who acted as her introducer, never omitted, as he presented her, to add the formula : “ ‘Tis a man of merit.”

She could not hit it off with Chapelain, the author of a play on the Maid of Orleans, because she thought him an insipid, flavourless person. “ This Chapelain,” she used to say, “ is a poor specimen. He wants everyone to be a virgin.”

To sum up she amazed everyone by the breadth of her knowledge and the vivacity of her conversation.

After a few weeks in Paris, Christina took the road to Compiègne, where the Court was then in residence. Mazarin came forth to meet her at Chantilly, accompanied by the King and by Monsieur, the King’s brother, whom he introduced to the Queen as ordinary gentlemen, members of his suite. But Christina—a second Joan of Arc—discerned that the aforesaid gentlemen were not at all what they tried to make out, but unquestionably Louis XIV and his brother, the Duc d’Orleans. “ I perceive, madame,” said Mazarin, “ that you are not to be taken in.” At Compiègne, Anne of Austria was at first rather taken aback by Christina’s costume and behaviour, but she quickly made allowances and soon admitted the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus to her friendship.

To the Jesuits, who swarmed the Court at Compiègne, our heroine paid a somewhat dubious compliment. A tragedy had just been played, the author of which belonged to the Company of Jesus. Christina had been bored to death by the performance, and told the reverend fathers that she would choose them neither as confessors nor tragic writers.

For a time it was thought at Compiègne that Christina would make a very presentable Queen of France. But nothing came of it. Moreover, our heroine greatly encouraged the love-affair of the young King with Hortense Mancini, Mazarin's niece.

Though she was not greatly liked by the ladies of the Court, Christina was very popular with the men. "She does not lose anything on acquaintance," wrote someone. "On the contrary she gains. Her knowledge of language, both living and dead, her culture, her urbanity, her exquisite mastery of French and Italian combine to embellish everything she says. She speaks our tongue without the slightest trace of a foreign or provincial accent. She endeavours most carefully to appear learned, and it's my idea that she was destined for a blue-stocking. But her knowledge and her talents pierce through the bushel beneath which she has attempted to hide her light. As for impropriety, I've never met anyone who could say he had heard her utter any. You cannot judge this woman, who is quite above the average, by ordinary standards. She is a philosopher with nothing of the woman about her but her sex. Her mind is so frank and open that she could never bring herself to put on the grimaces that are needed for successfully playing the feminine farce, or to wear the clothes required for the part."

Christina left Compiègne on the 23rd September 1656, and took the road to Turin. After staying a while with the Duke of Savoy, she reappeared in Rome at the beginning of 1657.

But hardly had she arrived in the City of the Popes than she experienced a violent longing to return to France. The sole explanation she offered of this latest

whim was a burning desire to see Louis XIV dance in a Court ballet.

So it is that we find Christina back again at the Château de Fontainebleau in October 1657. She had brought with her the Count Sentinelli, her captain of the guard, and the Marquis Monaldeschi, her chief equerry. As ill-luck would have it, these two Italians loathed one another and kept on plotting and scheming to see which of them could find the greatest favour with the Queen. The latter had grave suspicions concerning Monaldeschi. She had intercepted his correspondence and, convinced that he was betraying her, vowed to compass his doom.

The Marquis endeavoured to shift the responsibility of the treason on to someone else. But Christina saw through his manifold subterfuges. She summoned Monaldeschi to her room and said :

“ Marquis, in your opinion, what would a man deserve who betrays me ? ”

“ Your Majesty should have him put to death on the spot,” answered the Marquis, never dreaming that the question had reference to himself.

“ Good ! ” said the Queen. “ Remember those words. For my part, let me tell you, I never forgive.”

A few days later, on the 6th November, Christina sent for Father Lebel, Prior of the Maturins at Fontainebleau, to come to her in the Galerie des Cerfs, where she handed him an envelope sealed in three places, but with no address on it. The Queen enjoined him to forget neither the hour nor the place in which she had given this packet. Monaldeschi now began to betray some anxiety. He was already preparing to flee when the Queen forestalled him. In that same Galerie des Cerfs where she had received Father Lebel, she sent for her

chief equerry. The latter was looking anything but cheerful. After a few moments, Father Lebel came in attended by Sentinelli and a couple of soldiers. The Queen then asked the Prior for the packet he had in his keeping. She opened the envelope and extracted some letters and papers which she handed the Marquis to read.

They were the proof of his treachery.

Monaldeschi fell on his knees and tried to make excuses, and the soldiers drew their swords. Monaldeschi realised that the game was up and that he was about to die. The Queen did not disguise from him that this was so, and requested Father Lebel to prepare the unhappy man to meet his God. That done she quitted the gallery and retired to an adjoining room.

The following is the story of the death of the Marquis de Monaldeschi as related by Father Lebel himself.

“ Her Majesty came a little nearer me and, in a rather high voice, yet grave and restrained in tone, she said : ‘ Father, I will withdraw and leave this man with you. Prepare him for his death ; give heed to his soul.’ If this sentence had been passed upon me, I could not have been more terrified ; and when, at these words, the Marquis flung himself at her feet, I followed suit, begging her to forgive the unhappy gentleman. She said that she could not, and that the traitor was more guilty and more criminal than many a man sentenced to be broken on the wheel ; that he knew perfectly well with what implicit faith she had trusted his loyalty, revealing to him the most important affairs, her most secret thoughts ; further, that she did not wish to cast up at him all the benefits she had conferred upon him, more than she could ever have done for a brother, as which she had always

regarded him, and that his conscience alone should be his executioner. Having thus spoken, the Queen withdrew and left me with these three men who were standing with drawn swords, with the purpose of carrying out the execution. After the Queen had gone out, the Marquis flung himself at my feet and implored me piteously to go to Her Majesty and seek her pardon. The three men urged him to confess, their swords pointed at his breast, but without touching him ; while I, with tears in my eyes, exhorted him to ask pardon of God. The leader of the three went out to seek the Queen to ask her pardon and to implore her to have mercy on the poor Marquis, but coming back saddened, for that Her Majesty had ordered him to make haste, he said, weeping : ‘ Marquis, turn your thoughts on God and on your own soul. You have got to die.’ At these words, as though beside himself, the Marquis again flung himself at my feet, conjured me to go in again to Her Majesty to seek her pardon and grace, the which I did. Finding Her Majesty alone in her room, looking perfectly serene and unmoved, I approached her, falling at her feet, with tears in my eyes, my breast shaken with sobs. I implored her, by the agony and wounds of Jesus Christ to bestow pardon and grace on the Marquis. The Queen made as though she were grieved not to grant my request, but said that after all the perfidy and cruelty with which this unhappy man had acted towards her, he could never hope for pardon or remission, and added that many a man had been broken on the wheel who had not merited what this traitor had earned.

“ Seeing that my prayer had no effect on the Queen, I took the liberty of pointing out to her that she was under the roof of the King of France, and that she

should consider well what she was about to do and whether the King would approve of it. Whereupon Her Majesty made answer that she had a right to execute justice, calling God to witness that she designed nothing against the person of the Marquis, and had laid aside all hatred, and that she had in mind only his crime and his treachery, which were, she said, without parallel and involved everybody ; she added, moreover, that the King of France did not lodge her in his house as an escaped captive, that she was free to act as she pleased in the matter of doing justice to, or exacting it from, her own domestics, at all times and in all places, and that she was answerable for what she did to God alone. She added that what she was doing was not without precedent. I pointed out to the Queen that there was a difference, and that if kings had acted in this manner they had done so in their own domains and not elsewhere. But no sooner had I said these words than I was sorry, thinking that I had pressed the Queen too closely. Nevertheless, I again said : ‘ Madame, by the honour and esteem which you have won for yourself in France, I humbly beg Your Majesty to consider that this act (though in Your Majesty’s regard it seems quite just) may nevertheless be regarded by ordinary folk as violent and precipitate. Be, rather, generous and merciful towards the poor Marquis, or at least hand him over to the King’s justice and give him a trial in due form. Thus you will have full satisfaction and retain the reputation for wise conduct which the world has come to associate with all your actions.’

“ ‘ What, Father,’ replied the Queen, ‘ am I, in whom resides absolute and sovereign justice over my subjects, to see myself prosecuting a treacherous domestic, the

proof of whose crime and perfidy are in my possession, written and signed by his own hand ?'

" 'It is true, madame,' said I, 'but Your Majesty is an interested party.' The Queen interrupted me saying : 'No, no, father ; I will inform the King. Return now and have care for his soul. I cannot in conscience grant what you ask of me.' With these words she dismissed me. But I realised from the change in her voice and her concluding words that if she had been able to postpone the deed and change the scene of it, she would undoubtedly have done so. But the affair had gone too far for her to change her plans without running the risk of letting the Marquis slip through her fingers and putting her own life in jeopardy.

" In this extremity I knew not what to do. Go out, I could not, and even had I been able to do so, I was bound in charity and conscience to stay by the Marquis and prepare him for death. I therefore returned to the gallery and embracing the poor wretch, who was bathed in his own tears, I exhorted him as well and as urgently as I could that he should ask God for courage to meet his death, to think of his conscience, since there was no longer any hope of life for him in this world, and that, suffering death in the name of justice, he should repose in God alone his hopes for Eternity, where consolation surely awaited him.

" On hearing these sad tidings, he cried aloud two or three times, then flung himself on his knees before me, who was sitting on one of the benches in the gallery, and began his confession. But when he had succeeded some way, he rose two or three times, crying aloud. I made him recite the acts of faith. Renouncing every alien thought he finished his confession in Latin, French

and Italian according as he could best express himself in the agitation in which he found himself. The Queen's chaplain arrived just as I was putting a question to him to clear his mind of a doubt. Perceiving him, the Marquis, without waiting for the absolution, went up to him hoping for mercy from his intervention. They spoke a good while together, holding each other by the hand, in a corner of the apartment, and when their conference was over the chaplain went out, taking with him the chief of the executioners. Shortly afterwards, the chaplain remaining without, the other came to him alone and said: 'Marquis, ask pardon of God, for without more delay you must die. Have you confessed?' As he uttered these words he pushed him against the wall at the end of the gallery where the picture of Saint Germain is. I could not turn away so quickly but that I saw him give him a sword-thrust in the right side of the stomach. The Marquis trying to parry it, grasped the sword with his right hand, from which the other, as he withdrew it, cut off three fingers. The sword came away bent and then he told the other that he had armour underneath. He was in fact wearing a coat of mail which weighed from nine to ten pounds. Then his adversary began to slash him in the face, whereupon the Marquis cried: 'Father, Father!' I approached him, and the others withdrew a little, and, falling on one knee, he asked God to forgive him and said something else to me; I gave him absolution with the penance of suffering death patiently for his sins, forgiving those who were causing his death; and then he cast himself on the ground and, as he fell, one of the others gave him a blow on the top of the head which took away some of the bone; and being stretched on his belly, he made a

sign that they should strike at his neck, but they did him no great damage because the coat of mail which had mounted up with the collar of his doublet, got in the way of most of the blows. Howbeit, I exhorted him to remember God and to endure his fate with patience and other like matters. Then the leader came to me and asked whether he should deal him the final blow. I chid him roundly and said I had no counsel to give him thereon, and that it was his life, not his death, that I asked. Whereupon he craved my pardon and avowed that he had done amiss to ask me so nice a question. As we were exchanging these words, the poor Marquis, who was only awaiting the final blow, heard the door of the gallery open. Regaining courage, he turned round as well as he could, having seen that it was the chaplain who was coming in, and, leaning against the wainscot of the gallery, asked leave to speak with him ; and the chaplain went to his left side, while I remained on his right. The Marquis, turning round towards the chaplain and clasping his hands together, said something to him as though he were making a confession, and after which the chaplain said : 'Ask pardon of God.' Asking my leave, he then gave him absolution. After that he withdrew, bidding me stay with the Marquis, for that he was going to see the Queen. At the same time, he who had struck the Marquis on the body and was with the chaplain, on his left, ran him through the neck with a long straight sword, whereupon the Marquis fell upon his left side and spoke no more, albeit he lingered, still breathing, for a quarter of an hour, during which time I conjured and exhorted him as well as I was able. Having lost all his blood, he finished his life at a quarter to four in the afternoon.

I recited the *De Profundis* for him and prayed, after which the leader of the three shook him by the arm and the leg, unbuttoned his doublet and his breeches, searched him and found nothing save a little book of Hours of the Virgin and a small knife. He then departed, and I after him, to receive Her Majesty's commands. The Queen, on being assured of the death of the Marquis, expressed regret at having been compelled to order this execution on the person of the Marquis, but said that justice required it to be done on account of his crime and treachery and that she prayed God to pardon him. She commanded that he should be taken away and buried and that a Mass should be said for his soul. I ordered a bier to be made, and had him put in a tumbril because of the mist, the heaviness of the burden and the bad roads, and had him carried to the parish graveyard by my vicar and chaplain, assisted by three men, with orders to bury him in the church, near the font. All this was duly carried out at a quarter to six in the evening of Monday the eleventh day of November. The Queen sent one hundred *livres* by two of her footmen, to the convent for prayers for the repose of the Marquis's soul."

This sanguinary execution affords yet further proof of Christina's detestable arrogance and total lack of humanity. She never forgave. Always a Protestant at heart—despite her abjuration—she tore ahead like a wild beast to the end dictated by what she called her "conscience."

No one ever knew the nature of Monaldeschi's treacheries. Some have said that by revealing Christina's political projects he caused them to miscarry. It has also been alleged that Christina's crime was inspired by

Mazarin. The truth appears more simple. Monaldeschi, living on terms of intimacy with the Queen may have been in possession of some delicate personal secrets which Christina did not wish to be divulged. Gustavus Adolphus's daughter has taken good care not to tell us in her memoirs or her letters what was contained in the mysterious envelope entrusted to Father Lebel and handed back by him on the day of the assassination.

Monaldeschi's execution rendered Christina highly unpopular. She was blamed, however, not so much for the crime itself as for having carried out an act of absolutism in one of the King's palaces. Only a few sycophants, reeking more vilely of servility than the rest, maintained that the ex-Queen of Sweden still preserved the divine right of condemning her subjects to death.

The fact is that Christina had to wait several months for the affair to blow over, before she was able to go on to Paris. She arrived there in February 1658 and she was quartered in Cardinal Mazarin's suite. Nevertheless she was given to understand that it would be desirable that her stay should not exceed a few weeks.

The Queen stayed in Paris for the Carnival, and, as her crime doubtless caused her but little heart-searching, she threw herself wildly into every kind of excitement, dissembling her person and her sex in the strangest of disguises.

But Paris did not forgive her. At a session of the Academy, the secretary of the illustrious assembly was explaining the work of compiling the dictionary. He opened the glossary at the word *jeu* (game) and calmly indicated one of the ordinary applications of the word :

*Jeux de princes, qui ne plaisent qu'à ceux qui les font*

(“Princes’ games : games which only give pleasure to those who play them ”). Christina understood, and bit her lip.

Soon, having received a sum of two hundred thousand francs from Mazarin, she set out once more for Rome. There we again fall in with her in May 1658.

Being in urgent need of money, Christina, despite her solemn undertaking not to reappear in Sweden, decided to go to Stockholm. In the first place, she had made, through Count Sentinelli, a proposal to the Emperor of Austria that he should furnish her with a force of twenty thousand men, with which she would take forcible possession of Pomerania. Once she had that province in her power, she would do homage for it to the Austrian Crown, on condition that the latter granted her a substantial pension during her life. For a moment it looked as if the Court of Vienna was going to take a serious interest in the proposal, for it went so far as to delegate a plenipotentiary to treat with the Queen in Rome. But Christina, having given it further reflection, allowed the matter to drop. Moreover, the Pope just about this time granted her an annuity of twelve thousand scudi. Further, he appointed Cardinal Azzolini to look after her finances. The Cardinal was still a young man, and, in addition to his profound learning was conspicuously endowed with that characteristically Roman attribute, a charming and insinuating manner. Unfortunately, Christina almost immediately succeeded in embroiling her affairs with Alexander owing to her unshakable determination to marry Sentinelli to one of the wealthiest heiresses in Rome.

The Holy Father looking on her hands as still dyed in the blood of Monaldeschi, prevailed on the young

lady to retire to a convent and drove Christina's favourite beyond his borders.

Then, again, the Pope greatly disapproved of our heroine's friendly relations with the Queen of France and, strongly suspecting her of planning to levy troops in Rome for the armies of Louis XIV, he caused a guard to be kept in the neighbourhood of Christina's palace. To dissipate such suspicions and escape the surveillance, Christina went and shut herself up in a convent, moderated her interest in the French and made great parade of practising religious devotions in whose efficacy she certainly had no faith.

Meanwhile Christina was far from abandoning the desire she had already evinced of personally looking after her interests in Sweden, and, with this object in view, she sent her secretary to Charles Gustavus, one Davison, a Swedish convert to Catholicism. The King refused to have anything to say to Davison unless he would formally swear that he was not a Catholic. Davison wrote to the Queen to acquaint her with his non-success. Christina replied to him as follows : "One's honour and one's life are, it seems to me, two things that one should take care of. If you ever came to denying or concealing your religion, you would save neither the one nor the other. You must live and die a Catholic. If you fail to do so, you will render yourself unworthy of belonging to me. Never let the threats of the King of Sweden alarm you for a moment. Give up the attempt to see him and return to me. Come, without having done anything base or timid, and bring me incontestable proof that you have lived as a true Catholic. If you come back in this manner I shall welcome you with joy and kindness, and even if I were reduced to a scrap of bread for my

food I would share it with you. But if fear of punishment or hope of reward should cause you to fail in that duty which should be dearer to you than life, never look to see me again. Be assured that I will punish your cowardice, and that all the powers of the King of Sweden will not hinder me from compassing your death, even though you sought refuge within his very arms. Judge, then, whether you are in the due frame of mind to return to me or not, and be assured that I will keep my word."

Davison, who knew all about the melancholy fate of Monaldeschi, was convinced that Christina was perfectly capable of having him assassinated in whatever corner of the globe he might flee for refuge. He therefore did not abjure his Catholicism, and returned post haste to Rome.

During the period that Christina was in Italy, a woman named Gyldener, who was the same age as the Queen and strongly resembled her physically, passed herself off as Christina in Sweden. Several months elapsed before her real identity was discovered. Furious with rage, Christina sent word from Rome to Charles Gustavus to have the wretched woman put to death; but the King exercised his clemency. The adventuress got off with a month in prison on a diet of bread and water.

The more the years went by, the more Christina felt in her heart the bitterness of regret. It was in vain that she wrote and said, and caused it to be written and said, that when she renounced the throne she knew well what she was doing, having thought it all out for several years. In spite of all that, she felt that her present position was very humble, and longed to cut a figure again in the political world. She had an immense number of plans and projects, none of which ever bore

fruit. In 1660 she learned of the death of Charles Gustavus—alas, she was a Catholic now and it was useless to entertain the hope of reascending the throne of Sweden. Moreover, the King had left an heir behind him, a boy of four.

Nevertheless, the King's death hastened her return to Sweden. Forthwith she wrote off to the brother of Charles Gustavus, the Prince Adolphus John, who would be a member of the Regency Council until the young King came of age. "My Cousin," she began, "although during the late King's lifetime I had sometimes reason to be ill-contented with his measures, I always retained for him unimpaired that affection and friendship of which he had had too many proofs ever to let them sink into oblivion ; and that friendship has made me deeply sensible of his loss, the more so as it happened just when I was hoping for some change in his conduct that would prove to my advantage. However, since one must bow to the will of God without repining, I will not waste my time in unavailing regrets, only hoping that God will make up for this loss in other ways. I thank you for the expressions of affection contained in your kind letter, and assure you that you will find in me all the willingness you could desire to help on the project which you tell me you have formed, of fostering a good understanding between me, the King my nephew, and the Queen his mother. I hope to have an opportunity of giving myself the satisfaction of offering some practical proof of my wish to befriend them. I must let you know that I have made up my mind to come into closer touch with the places in which I could be of greater use to their Majesties, in the hope of being able to settle my claims and bring my business to a satisfactory termination.

I should be greatly obliged to you if, through your good offices, it could be made possible for me to secure a prompt return to Rome from which, owing to pressing business needs, I absent myself with regret."

Christina arrived in Stockholm in the month of September 1660. She was received with due respect and was even allotted her former apartments in the Royal Palace. She presided over, and personally opened, the Diet at which the testamentary dispositions of the late King were made known. Adolphus John was excluded from the Regency because he possessed neither the esteem nor the confidence of the people. From this Christina indulged the hope that she would be given an important share in the Regency. But she was too proud to ask for it, and it never seemed to occur to the members of the Diet to offer it.

Her outstanding fault, in the eyes of the Swedes, was that she had renounced the religion of her country.

Having withdrawn to one of her estates, the castle of Nordkoeping, Christina decided to live there in the practice of her new religion, and she ordered Mass to be celebrated by a Catholic priest in the chapel belonging to the estate. She was at once requested to put a stop to this practice. She protested : "I am astonished that the Court should take such a step, and, in the knowledge that I have deserved better treatment, I make one more effort to mitigate the hostility of my cruel enemies. If the representatives of foreign countries had no privileges, I should make no complaint, but that I should be treated worse than the humblest foreign envoy is contrary to reason, an outrage against right, and repugnant to all law, human and divine. What else am I doing but testifying to the government that I have no

claim, no expectation for the future, since the mere fact of professing the Roman faith is enough to nullify all expectation of taking part in Swedish affairs. In God's name then do not suffer the Swedish nation to render itself detestable by an action so unworthy as to fail in respect towards a princess undeserving of such treatment."

The letter concluded with an urgent request that her affairs should be settled as soon as possible. The letter had the desired effect, and Christina was granted the privilege accorded to representatives of foreign countries ; that is to say the right to practise their own religion.

At last, all her business arranged, Christina was able to depart. She arrived in Hamburg on the 16th May 1661.

In June 1662 Christina set out for Rome, where she immediately involved herself in an imbroglio with Louis XIV.

In 1662, the Duc de Créqui, the French Ambassador in Rome, having met with insulting treatment, his attendants fell out with the Pope's Corsican Guard. The latter came and laid siege to the Palazzo Farnese, where the Duc was quartered, and went to the length of firing at the windows. The ambassador appeared on his balcony and the fire grew hotter than ever. The carriage of the Duchesse de Créqui was attacked in the streets and one of the lady's pages was killed. The King of France, on learning of this outrage, at once recalled his ambassador, took forcible possession of the Principality of Avignon, which was Papal territory, and mobilised part of his forces with the intention of dispatching them to Italy. At the height of the quarrel between Alexander VII and Louis XIV, Christina fancied she saw a chance of playing the rôle of mediator.

She wrote to Louis XIV. The King of France's reply was very double-edged. He told her, pretty clearly, to be so good as to mind her own business.

“*Madame ma sœur*,” so the letter ran, “I am sorry that Your Majesty should have been at pains to dispatch to me the Sieur d'Alibert in connection with a matter that hardly deserved that trouble. I know that persons of your rank rightly consider themselves free to act as they please and, on such occasions as they may desire to give me marks of their affection, I shall esteem them highly, as I have done the polite greetings which the aforesaid Alibert has conveyed to me on your behalf. In those matters in which the interests of others are, in your eyes, dearer and more important than my own, I shall but bewail my ill fortune, and shall always remain no less sincerely, *Madame ma sœur*,” etc., etc.

Christina replied as follows :

“*Monsieur mon frère*, I have just received the letter which Your Majesty was so good as to write me from Saint-Germain on the 16th September, and as its opening surprises me, I feel obliged to explain my position to Your Majesty more clearly than I have done hitherto. I wrote to Your Majesty, immediately after the unfortunate Corsican incident, a friendly letter in which I placed at Your Majesty's disposal my friendship and my good offices without any other condition than was implied in the request that Your Majesty would require nothing of me that might be inimical to the interests of the Holy See nor inconsistent with the respect of which the Catholic princes and Your Majesty yourself have always made profession in its regard.

“As touching the advice which I proffered to Your Majesty, I have the consolation of knowing that it accorded with the sentiments entertained by the Catholic princes as a whole who, no less than I, have endeavoured to mitigate your anger on this occasion ; and I have the satisfaction of knowing that all the ministers now representing foreign powers in Rome will bear witness that I have done my duty towards the Church without impairing the friendship which I entertain for you.

“It is for this reason that I beg you not to think that my recent letters were written with that complaisance which Your Majesty terms kindness. If Your Majesty knew me well, I feel sure you would never do me the injustice of harbouring such a suspicion and would believe that in conveying to you the truths of which I am witness, I did so with no other intention than that of putting them before you in their true light. If I have given Your Majesty counsels of moderation, I am to some extent excusable, since not only have I acted upon them myself but have seen Your Majesty act upon them in similar occasion, without incurring thereby the reproach of weakness ; and that same love of glory which Your Majesty has done me the honour to ascribe to me has so strongly persuaded me that there can be no justice in seeking vengeance against the Church, that I do not think I am mistaken in my opinion. Now that you have made your name feared in Rome, make it adored there, and cease to lend your glorious name and your military forces to those secret foes who would fain seize the opportunity to deal it a mortal blow. Vouchsafe me therefore the happiness of cultivating your friendship without the fear of compromising my duty to the Church.”

The letter was harsh, and Louis XIV took deep umbrage at it. The incident terminated without Christina's mediation. The Corsicans were expelled from Rome and the King of France's demand that an account of the insult inflicted upon his ambassador, and its consequences, should be inscribed on a Roman building, was granted. The said inscription was removed three years later, under the Pontificate of Clement IX.

Having greatly upset "the King her brother" over the Corsican affair, Christina put the coping-stone on her labours by getting out of gear with the Pope. It was then borne in upon her that a journey abroad was an urgent necessity. She went to Hamburg. When this fresh escapade became known in Sweden, the government displayed some disquietude.

Having reached the frontiers of her former realm, the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus was held up by a messenger from the Regency Council who came armed with orders that she was not to come to Stockholm with her chaplain. A kinsman of the Count de la Gardie, who was accompanying the Queen, begged her to stay where she was while he went on ahead to put matters right with the Court. While she was waiting for leave to continue her journey, Christina gave out that, any time she liked, she could resume the Swedish crown. With great calmness she remarked: "I am Catholic, but my sword is Calvinist."

A further messenger dispatched by the Court to Christina informed her that no very agreeable reception awaited her in Sweden, and that she would be much better advised to go back to Hamburg and there await the meeting of the Swedish Parliament, which would decide concerning her presence at Stockholm.

Returning therefore to Hamburg, the Queen brought about an incident of the heroï-comic order. On being informed that one of her musicians had left her and taken service with the Duke of Savoy, Christina immediately caused the following announcement to be published : “I wish it to be known that I will never consent to Antonio Rivani [such was the musician’s name] exchanging my service for another’s, that henceforth he is in the world for me alone, and that would not be for long if he took service with anyone else. Whatever he may have become, if he has left my service, I wish him to return to it, and even if he should try to make me believe that he has lost his voice, that would not matter. Whatever he is, he must live and die in my service, or ill will befall him.”

It is a little difficult to understand the significance of these expressions and the meaning of all these threats of an untimely end.

It was while she was in Hamburg that Christina learnt, on the 16th March 1667, of the death of Alexander VII and of Giulio Rospigliani’s elevation to the chair of Saint Peter under the name of Clement IX. The Queen, who had always entertained a very lively regard for this prelate, made up her mind there and then, although she was in a Protestant city, to have a great fête to celebrate his election. She therefore lit up the façade of her house, and had a display of fireworks in which was a set piece representing the arms of the new Pope and the Church of Rome triumphant over the powers of heresy. In vain had it been pointed out to the Queen how manifestly unbecoming it was to indulge in such demonstration in the heart of a Protestant city. It was all words wasted.

Retribution was soon to follow. Christina had sown the wind. She was to reap the whirlwind. Before long her palace was besieged. She replied by mounting guns at all the windows, and soon the Queen's men and the Hamburg soldiers were fighting hand to hand in the gateways. Delighted to be playing at war, Christina ordered her musketeers to charge. Some men fell, the riot increased. The Queen was obliged to look to her safety. Disguised as a sailor, she hastened to ask refuge of the Swedish resident. Meanwhile the victorious assailants were putting her house to the sack.

A few days later Christina drew up an account of the affair in which of course she herself played the heroine's part.

The Swedish Parliament met in 1668 and went into Christina's position. Count Magnus de la Gardie, her mortal enemy, convinced the delegates that the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus had it in mind to rob the young King of his throne and to make herself Queen again. Nevertheless, they satisfied the material claim which she put forward. She declared herself quite pleased.

Before leaving Hamburg, Christina took it into her head to visit the Duchy of Bremen, where Field-Marshal Wrangel, who was in command of the Swedish troops, received her with high honours. The troops were paraded, and Christina at once decided that she had within her the gifts of a marshal—or of a sergeant-instructor—and said she would put the men through their manœuvres herself. Obedient to her wishes, Wrangel hastened to comply. . . . She made a terrible hash of it. Anything but proud of her tactical skill, Christina left the field very crestfallen.

On the 22nd November 1668, she re-entered Rome and paid her devoirs to the new Pope, Clement IX.

In 1667, John Casimir, Grand Elector of Poland, abdicated the throne, and Christina considered that Poland would be only too glad to have her as Queen.

Very astutely the Poles pretended they were prevented from giving themselves this honour, by reason of Christina's sex and her marked aversion to marriage. This only stiffened her resolve, and she made answer that “as regards the question of sex, that objection could be disposed of by examples from the history of Poland itself. For the rest, every one knows that I have ruled, *as a King*, over a realm and people second to none in valour, that I was crowned just as the Kings of Sweden are crowned, that homage was paid to me as to a King, and that I governed Sweden for ten years as a King, more absolute in my prerogatives than any of my predecessors ; that I am still adored, feared and respected because—and I can say it without vanity—my auspices have been the most glorious and the most advantageous in the world for Sweden. If God grants that the same fortune should attend me in Poland, I think people will have reason to be satisfied with me. When I was ruler of Sweden, I was little more than a child, and there is a likelihood that, with God's assistance, I shall acquit myself even better of my duties now that I am in my prime and in full vigour of mind and body, able to endure fatigue and prolonged mental application. What can be demanded of me that I could not perform ? Is it a question of administering justice, of unfolding a line of reasoning, or of coming to a decision, in the councils of state ? I undertake to prove myself adequate to all these duties, if not with as much eloquence and technical

skill, at all events with as much good sense as anybody. To serve the common-weal, must one march at the head of an army ? That will I gladly do, and I protest that that hope alone is enough to make me long for the Crown of Poland, and if it were to be offered me on condition that I did not march with the troops, I should not accept it. If one takes the trouble to look back over the whole course of my life, to consider my disposition, my temperament, I think one might do me the justice to confess that my sex does not enter into the account at all. As to the second point, marriage, I confess it puts me in a very difficult position, for, considering my temperament and my age, I do not see that there is any remedy. I am a mortal enemy of its terrible yoke, and would not submit to it for the empire of the whole world. God having willed that I should be born free, I will never consent to give myself a master.

“A third difficulty, which I put forward myself, is my ignorance of the Polish language, but the Duc de Condé, the Prince de Lorraine and the Duke of Neuburg know no more of it than I do, and I will do, what they cannot do, I will try to learn it in the minimum of time.”

Her anxiety to obtain something that no one in Poland dreamt of giving her, seems very incompatible with our heroine’s natural pride. She was, however, possessed, in the highest degree, with the desire to rule. Since her abdication, all the attentions bestowed upon her, whether at the French Court, in Rome, Hamburg or Sweden, had been but marks of respect paid to the memory of her past reign, and, above all, of her dead father.

Nevertheless, Clement IX, in a Brief addressed to the Polish Diet, supported the candidature of the Swedish ex-Queen.

But the Poles were not to be thus influenced, and their choice lighted on Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania. In their reply to Christina, the Poles had sternly reminded her of Monaldeschi's assassination, and recalled to memory the instances, all too numerous, in her life in which the only qualities she had displayed were harshness and arrogance.

Clement IX, who was in absolute accord with Christina on all points, died in 1669. He was succeeded by Cardinal Emilio Altieri, Clement X, who was more than eighty years of age and who took as his coadjutor Cardinal Pauluccio-Paulucci Alberoni, a man of intellect and culture and a great lover of the arts. The Cardinal turned Rome into a veritable City of Pleasure, and Christina became a sort of Queen of it. She founded an academy, which subsequently came to be known as the Academy of the Arcades, as well as an Institute of Physics, Natural History and Mathematics.

Clement X died in 1677. Christina did her utmost, by wire-pulling and intrigue, to bring about the election of Cardinal Conti as his successor, he being the brother of her First Chamberlain. But Rome was afraid that the Queen's domination over Conti would be altogether too obvious if he became Sovereign Pontiff, so the choice of the Sacred College lighted on Benedetto Odescalchi, who became Pope under the name of Innocent XI. From the first he showed himself at variance with Christina, and it took a long time to establish peace between them.

In 1682, the news reached Rome that the King of Sweden had broken his leg in falling from his horse and that his life was in danger.

As he had no heir in the direct line, Christina's ambitions began to revive. She straightway wrote to

Olivecrantz, who was at that time controller of her estates : " I hope that it will not be forgotten that the Crown which they possess was a gift bestowed on King Charles Gustavus and his descendants by me and the Swedish nation, and in the event of the death of the present King Charles, Sweden could not, short of committing a crime against God and me, choose another King or another Queen without duly safeguarding my rights. Remind Sweden of her duty and assure her that so long as I live I shall long for her welfare and prosperity and that if she would give heed to my counsels, in the event of an interregnum or a minority, she would have even greater reason to speak well of my sincerity." But the King recovered from his fall and did not die until 1697, leaving an heir, the celebrated Charles XII.

Whilst in Rome there were premature rumours of the death of the King of Sweden, in Sweden it was authoritatively announced that Christina herself had died. The latter, very much alive, hastened to protest. " As for the news of my death, it does not surprise me. There are plenty of people who would like to hear of it, and I don't begrudge them a little satisfaction now and again. It will occur, however, just when God pleases. But up to the present I am not sufficiently in grace to look for it. I am in the most perfect health and strength, but that is no guarantee against being cut off, although, to all appearances, a good many people will die before me who do not think they will. I assure you I await death with the utmost equanimity. . . . But neither wishes nor fear will make one die, as they say, and it argues a slight acquaintance with Queen Christina to suppose her capable of sinking to such depths. Whenever it pleases God to put an end to my days, Sweden will be duly

informed of my decease, and people will have the pleasure of learning of it from sources of unimpeachable authenticity."

Weary of the gay and social life she had been living in Rome, Christina, towards the end of her days, began to think more and more about religion, attempting to analyse the quality of her love of Christianity. She thought she could truly say that she believed sincerely, but that intolerance and fanaticism were equally repugnant to her. In a letter she wrote to the Chevalier de Terlon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, she delivered herself as follows : " Since you want to know what I think about the present alleged measures for the extirpation of heresy in France, I am delighted to tell you, and as I pride myself in speaking always without fear or favour, I will confess that I am not vastly impressed with the prospects of this great design, and that I can hardly rejoice in it as something advantageous to our religion. On the contrary, I can clearly foresee the prejudice to which proceedings so novel in character will give rise. Now, in your own heart, are you really convinced of the sincerity of these converts ? I hope they will truly obey their God and King, but I fear their stubbornness, and I should not care to answer for all the sacrilege these Catholics will commit, under the guidance of missionaries who treat of our Holy Mysteries in very perfunctory fashion. Fighting-men make strange apostles, and I fancy they are more in their element when busy with slaughter, rape and rapine than in practising the arts of spiritual persuasion. So I am not surprised to hear (from an unimpeachable source) that they are discharging their mission in a manner wholly consonant with their character. I am sorry for the

people handed over to their tender mercies, sorry for all families brought to ruin, all honest folk compelled to beg their bread, and I cannot view what is taking place in France to-day with anything but compassion."

This letter was made public, and the "Dutch Gazette" seized the opportunity of using it to prove that the Queen was still Protestant. That gave her mortal offence, and she bombarded her calumniators with letters of ungovernable fury.

At Rome, Christina embroiled herself afresh with the Pope. The latter having taken steps to curtail the inviolability of certain churches and of the houses of certain foreign nobles, Christina considered that she had quite a special grievance in this matter. She had given asylum to a young man who was being pursued by the Papal police, and as they proceeded to attack her house, she defended it with her people sword in hand. From that time onward she went to church with a sword at her side and a pistol in her belt, accompanied by an armed attendant. The Pope, realising that he had overstepped the mark, sent her a basket of very choice fruit. "Don't let him think he's going to lull me to sleep with his presents," said the Queen. "I keep on my guard." When this speech was repeated to Innocent XI he exclaimed, "*E donna!* It's a woman."

This interjection had the effect of stinging Christina to fury. She went about everywhere giving currency to all manner of reproaches and accusations against the Vicar of Christ. The Pope replied by suspending the pension formerly granted her by Alexander VII. When she heard this, Christina raised p<sup>æ</sup>an of victory and wrote off to Cardinal Azzolini, saying, "I can assure you that you have sent me the most agreeable news in

the world. I implore you to do me this justice, and God, who knows the fire that burns in my heart, knows that I am not lying : the twelve thousand scudi which the Pope allowed me were the one blot on my life, and I received them from the hand of God as the greatest humiliation whereby He could mortify my pride. I know well that I am now in His favour, since He does me the signal kindness of so gloriously removing this burden from me. I beg you to thank the Pope for the kindness he has done me in relieving me of this obligation."

In the month of February 1689, the Queen had an attack of erysipelas in the legs, accompanied by a violent fever. She at once asked that Extreme Unction should be administered to her. However, she got well again. The good people of Rome gave way to universal rejoicing, and, though the Pope had forbidden it, three *Te Deums* were sung in her honour in three separate churches. Cardinals and princes gave fêtes in honour of the ex-Queen, and balls were held in the public squares.

"God has seen good," wrote Christina to Olivecrantz, "to drag me out of the clutches of death against all my hopes, for I had already made up my mind to this last journey, which I believed inevitable. However, I am still full of vitality, through the miracles of grace, nature and skill, which have conspired to give me back my life and health. My constitution has pulled me through an illness fit to kill a score of Hercules."

But Christina's convalescence was not of long duration. Before long she got worse again, and on the 14th April 1689, she had a fresh and violent return of the fever. Erysipelas attacked one of her lungs. The last hour of the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus was about to strike. Christina, realising that all was over, sent her excuses to

the Pope. The Holy Father gave her his absolution and promised to come in person to visit her. On the 19th April, in the morning, Christina passed away. She was sixty-three.

Cardinal Azzolini, who was much in favour with the Queen, inherited all her property. It was of little good to him, for he himself died two months later.

It was his nephew, Pompei Azzolini, who effectively succeeded to the heritage, which was composed, for the most part, of books, manuscripts, pictures, medals and antiques of great rarity. A part of this collection is now at the Vatican.

One of the most singular, most striking and most frequently exhibited of Christina's characteristics was the marked preference she extended to men, a preference of which the preceding pages have given many examples. She liked men, their temperament, their ways, their style, their conversation. It was only with them that she was really at ease. Woman as she was, she tried to ape the man not only in her dress but in her mode of feeling, judging, thinking, loving, and even of suffering. A "King" and no Queen, she was far from going out of her way to remind such as forgot it that she was a woman. She would be treated as a man, and when things turned to her prejudice, she refused to take refuge behind the respect due to the sovereign. She was a "sportsman," and "fair play" was her watchword. Grandiose, authoritative, brutal, Christina had no feelings of pity. "Pity," she was wont to tell herself, "is woman's weakness, or her strength." And it went hard with those who were so unlucky as, by fault or misfortune, to deserve or incur her displeasure or her wrath. She would break or kill. There was no middle course. For

her servants she had not the slightest human consideration ; not the faintest personal esteem. She paid or she punished. Her code of greatness, her rule of command, must be rigidly applied. The King does not err. He cannot, and must not, do any wrong. Of absolute sovereignty absolute wisdom is the necessary corollary. That is thinking like a man, and no mistake.

True, history records the lives of queens who wielded a power and an empire still more formidable than hers. A century after her, Catherine of Russia was to appear in an amazing blaze of light, her word law to millions, obeyed as completely as Christina, and feared not a whit the less. But Catherine was essentially a woman, a tiger-cat even. She plotted, schemed, fawned, planned, commanded and had recourse to all the arts of seduction and blandishment known to her sex. The game she played was more alluring than the Queen of Sweden's because it was more human, more fleshly human, more fiercely human, in its character.

Christina was not a great monarch, but she had one point of superiority over many other sovereigns, namely, for ten successive years she upheld a theory of government and applied it with passionate energy.

Whether she reigned or whether she reigned not, Christina was ever a sovereign. She confided to no one her joys, her disappointments, her sufferings. All the world has discussed her, but none have read her secret. All her life long Christina was play-acting. Never for an instant did she reveal her real self.

What was her true countenance ; what were her inmost thoughts ? She tells us not, and we can offer no clue.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME FANTASTIC MASQUERADERS

#### I

#### *Anne Grandjean*

**I**N the year 1735 there was born at Grenoble a little girl named Anne Grandjean.

The father, who was a carpenter by trade, would have preferred a boy ; the mother, who wanted a girl, was delighted, and made her husband put a good face on the matter. The good man, accustomed to obey, made no bones about it.

So Anne grew up, carefully watched over by her parents, who stood in wholesome awe of God and the Devil.

At the age of fifteen, Anne, a model of obedience and filial respect, presented the appearance of an amiable child with a pretty face and a bosom extraordinarily well rounded for her years.

Alas, the Evil One was on the watch, and it was soon remarked that the young person had more attractions for the lasses than for the lads of the town.

A scandal ensued.

The poor little wench, convinced that she was in a state of mortal sin, unburdened herself to her confessor. He, good simple man, was not the sort to beat about the bush, or to worry himself with casuistic subtleties borrowed from the Fathers of the Church. Having heard what his penitent had to say, this was his reply :

“ *Mon enfant*, since you do not feel drawn, as is meet,

to young men, it is because a mistake has been made about you, and petticoats are not your proper garb."

"Father, I do not understand."

"My child, it is quite plain. You are a boy, and an error was made when you were written down a girl. Go back to your home, therefore, acquaint your parents therewith and, as quickly as possible, discard your petticoats for a man's doublet. Learn some manly trade and as soon as may be marry some honest girl."

Parents and child took the priest's word for Gospel truth, and a few days later, her woman's raiment safely stowed, Anne, attired as a working man, was toiling away at her father's side.

Naturally, at the start, there was a good deal of talk, and the great topic of conversation in Grenoble was the strange transformation of Anne Grandjean into Jean-Baptiste Grandjean.

When, however, it was observed that Jean-Baptiste was as enterprising with the maids as Anne had been shy and reserved with them, no one had any further doubt that they were face to face with a real boy.

A month went by, and the *curé* published the banns. Jean-Baptiste Grandjean was about to wed Jacqueline Legrand. But there the matter rested, for just at that moment Jean-Baptiste became violently enamoured of Françoise Lambert of Chambéry.

This Françoise Lambert was a very wideawake young person.

"My fair beloved," said she, "I like your face and willingly will I take you for my husband. Only, I cannot forget that only a year ago you were a very beautiful young cooing dove, darning stockings, stirring the soup and managing the household of your father and

mother. And even to-day when I come to look at you—I mean superficially—you could don my skirt, petticoats and bodice and wear my hats without anyone crying fie for shame. No, by my troth, 'tis a boy and not a maiden I am fain to wed, and there are in Chambéry a good few midwives who are very capable of settling the question and determining whether or not I can become your affianced bride."

"But, Françoise, I am a boy, and, as such, I cannot display myself to these midwives of yours."

"Well, it's a case of take it or leave it."

"Well, then, I'll do as you wish."

The midwives were categorical: Jean-Baptiste was certainly a boy.

The marriage took place and the young couple went to Lyons to set up a business.

Alas!

Jacqueline Legrand, who had just missed marrying Jean-Baptiste, could not forgive his faithlessness. She fell in with Françoise and said to her:

"You know, *ma chère*, that you've gone and married an hermaphrodite!"

Poor Françoise was terribly taken aback.

The first thing she did was to send Jacqueline packing; then when she came to think matters over, it did seem a little curious that month after month should go by without bringing her any indication of a child being on the way. She thought, to begin with, that her husband had hoodwinked the midwives, and that alone was enough to make her feel terribly out of gear with her conscience and her religion.

Françoise hurried off to her confessor.

Just as calmly as the *curé* at Grenoble had said to Anne,

“ You are a boy,” the *curé* at Lyons said to Françoise,  
“ Your husband is not a man.”

Returning home, the unhappy young person flung her arms round her husband’s neck and, moaning and groaning, urged him to go and solicit the protection of the Vicar-General.

Alas, the Vicar-General had no time to pronounce his decision. The municipal authorities of Lyons, who had got wind of Jacqueline Legrand’s scandalous gossipings, arrested poor Jean-Baptiste and flung him into a dungeon, with manacles about his feet.

There they handed him over to the surgeons.

These gentry gave out that it was a case of a “ feminine hermaphrodite,” and Jean-Baptiste was exposed for three days to the public gaze in the stocks with a placard stuck up in front of him inscribed with the words, “ A defiler of the Sacrament of Marriage.” After this he was whipped, sentenced to perpetual banishment—and kept in prison. Grandjean lodged an appeal.

He was transferred to the Châtelet in Paris 1765. But as they did not know whether to put him with the men or the women, he was put in solitary confinement in a cell from which every ray of light was excluded.

The Paris medical faculty came and examined him. In their view it was certainly an hermaphrodite, but with a strong feminine bias, who, in good faith and simplicity, not knowing any better, had taken itself for a man.

The Parliament of Paris decreed that Grandjean was henceforth to be known by the name of Anne and was to be regarded as a woman. The marriage was annulled and Anne was forbidden to have anything to do with anyone of the female sex.

What ultimately became of this strange creature no one knows.

## II

*Amelia Bloomer Jenks*

AMELIA BLOOMER JENKS was born in 1818. She married a barrister of Boston and, from the year 1849 onwards, conceived it her duty to cry aloud to the world the wretched plight of women, to announce the conquests which women ought to contemplate in occupations which they had hitherto been accustomed to regard as a sort of male preserve and, as something on account, stuck out for a total reform in women's dress.

It was in the pages of a paper known as *The Lily* that Mrs. Bloomer first published her fulminating articles.

In the *Illustrated London News*, somewhere about 1851, was a picture of Amelia Bloomer in her newly-invented costume: a kind of Turkish trousers covered by a tunic reaching to the knee and gathered-in at the waist by a band of ribbon.

Mrs. Bloomer claimed that this was the only sensible sort of dress for the women of the New World, combining as it did usefulness with dignity.

Bloomerism wrought terrible ravages on the other side of the Atlantic.

“In America,” writes Barbey d’Aurevilly, “the blue-stockings have made a formidable move forward. The blue-stockings have been transformed into a blue blouse. Women have been suffered ‘to play the man’ to the top of their bent. The men of America have looked upon them much as the bull looks on the frog.”

It was *Punch* which, in its way, introduced the virus of bloomerism into Europe. *Punch* flung itself into the task with zest, depicting in score upon score of drawings how Society looked according to the gospel approved by Mrs. Bloomer: the maiden in trousers proposing to the bashful young man, and a host of other topsy-turvy situations. *Punch* too it was who had the idea of bloomers in stars and stripes, like the American flag.

Before long *Charivari* took up the tale in France. Mrs. Bloomer and her disciples won a world-wide reputation, which was in all probability much to their surprise.

But everything comes to an end, and Mrs. Bloomer faded dismally away. Bloomerism became a thing of the past. Of the woman in breeches, the only surviving vestige at the beginning of this century was the woman in cycling breeches—the most horrible thing imaginable.

## III

*Madame Dieulafoy*

MADAME DIEULAFOY always dressed as a man and wore men's clothes whenever she went abroad to attend to her multitudinous occupations. But Madame Dieulafoy, who thus put on the man, had some strange ideas of her own. She maintained that a feminine education, that is, educating all children as girls, was the only way of teaching young folk to behave properly in Society. So in her establishment, whenever a Comedy of Manners was given, the female parts were always taken by boys. Quite seriously, Madame Dieulafoy confidently hoped

that these boys in skirts and petticoats, simpering, ogling and toying with their fans, would make nineteenth-century France as polished and well-behaved as France of the eighteenth century had been: a strange notion, defensible only because there is something to be said for almost everything. But why, then, seeing that Madame Dieulafoy ascribed such virtue to the petticoat, did she herself dress like a man?

Laurent Tailhade has drawn for us the following portrait of Madame Dieulafoy:

“A little gentleman verging on middle age, a slender, dapper little figure, with heels almost as high as stilts, which gave him a walk at once embarrassed and springy. His countenance was all pointed, pointed nose and pointed chin, with an extraordinarily tiny head surmounted by pale fair hair. Accoutred, for the most part, in black frock coat, except of a morning, when he wore a lounge suit of the same hue, a cape with a hood, or a silken hat to match—the little gentleman thus attired for the Louvre, the Library or Society in general, was Madame Jeanne Dieulafoy at your service. Of an evening she (we must go back to ‘she’) put on a tail coat with no great pretensions to elegance, which she wore when dining out or when present at some academic function. She would attend a fancy-dress ball in a scarlet coat, but being frail and spindle-shanked, forebore to finish it off with black silk stockings and knee-breeches. A country-bred man, whether he lived in Paris or elsewhere, when he saw her would immediately have thought of Sarrazine the singer. ‘Who,’ he would have wanted to know, ‘was this student, with so many wrinkles in his face, and what sort of an examination was he reading for now?’”



MADAME DUCUAY AND HER HUSBAND M. MARCEL DUCUAY



Madame Dieulafoy was not the only woman to wear breeches in Paris. Madame Marc de Montifaud used to appear disguised as an ephebe, between two fair "doctoresses" of *La Fronde*, as once upon a time the youthful Athis had wandered among the glades of Pessinonte.

But whereas Madame Dieulafoy's suit had a funereal and Quaker-like appearance, Marc de Montifaud affected the hues of springtime and fantastic fashions. You might easily have taken her for a dandy of Alcazar or Eldorado, with her wide headdress shaped like a lyre, her mauve, willow-green or purple-red cravates, her dove-coloured hats, her make-up, her tinsel trappings and all the rest of it. For she was a woman of fantasy, a bohemian, and as little of a *bourgeoise* as you could possibly imagine.

In contrast to her the Dieulafoy household had its eye on the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, and austerity in dress was part and parcel of the lady's aspirations.

Although you would come across some profoundly deep old gentleman there, and some blue-stockings contemporary with Sesostris, the house was an attractive one, the table appetising and the entertainment a feast of wit. In place of the relentless after-dinner music, Madame Dieulafoy substituted, in a mood of high seriousness, some pieces adapted from the Latin. The "Bucolics" of Virgil were played in costume and in the learned tongue. Bespectacled professors threw themselves for all they were worth into the parts of Damoetas, Corydon or Tityrus. The audience looked as though it understood the gibberish, and the shade of the dead Dupanloup thrilled with delight.

It was a great day, too, for the author of *Parysatis* when M. Cartellous de Beauxhotes produced her five-act drama in the amphitheatre at Béziers, the whole set to music, and rather feeble music, by Camille Saint-Saens. But it was a still more splendid occasion when, at the Countess Diane's, Pierre Loti, powdered, painted, encased in corsets, and made up to look like the archer on the frieze at the Louvre known as "Jeanne Dieulafoy," came and fell on his knees, in the attitude of a warrior of Ahasuerus or Xerxes, at the feet of Jeanne Dieulafoy herself. The revue-mongers, both in the artistic cabarets of Montmartre and the amusement halls of the common people, spared Madame Dieulafoy their ridicule and satire. Despite the absurdity of her trappings, she inspired at the very first sight feelings of well-merited respect. When she published *Parysatis*, a modest, soundly erudite and thoroughly conscientious book, someone said satirically that you would think it had been written by Salammbo's manicurist.

We hardly like to relate the story—it has been told often enough before—the celebrated *bon mot* ". . . et maintenant allons . . . fumer" addressed to her by an interlocutor who felt a little annoyed at her insistence on being treated exactly as a man. Jeanne Dieulafoy, we fancy, took no notice of such gibes. She had a stout heart and sound common sense. Her ambition—the ambition of Astier Réhu—enclosed her in a circle of all the decencies, like Brunhilde's fire, shutting her off from everything that was not quite smooth and proper and "the thing." A lion seemed indecent compared with the poodles of the Palais Mazafin. She ceased to know us when the explosion at Foyot's cracked our skulls. At death's door, accused of anarchy, dying and paragraphed

in the papers, we lost twice over the Buloz blue of which Veuillot speaks and that ink-eraser whiteness which Barbey d'Aurevilly discovered for M. Paul Bourget. A police bomb, in cracking our skulls, also ruined our characters in the eyes of Madame Dieulafoy.

## CHAPTER V

### CATALINA DE ERANSO, NUN AND ADVENTURESS

“ **M**OTHER, I want to go back to San Sebastian de Guipuzcoa.”

“ What whim is this, my daughter ? ”

“ Mother, I feel no longer worthy to live in your house, nor to take my vows there.”

“ My child, your father, Miguel de Eranso, and your mother, Maria Perez de Galarraga, and I, know more than you about the thorns of life, and, desirous of keeping them from your path, we have decided that the way of prayer and meditation is the only one on which you should enter.”

“ But, Mother, have I not anything to say in the matter ? Am I not suffered to decide what shall become of me ? Must I submit to a discipline against which my whole being rebels ? ”

“ Strange words, these, my daughter ; and, pray, what mean those words, ‘ my being ’ ? . . . But there, I am too well disposed towards you to argue with you. Go back to your cell. Cast yourself down before your crucifix and implore the Most High that He will forgive you the thoughtless words which you have uttered.”

Feeling that she could not bend the will of her aunt the prioress of the Dominican Nuns of San Sebastian, Doña Catalina de Eranso flounced out of her presence in a manner that indicated an impetuosity of character ill-suited to endure the discipline of the cloister.

Born in 1592 and handed over to her aunt in 1596,

Catalina, at the time our tale begins, that is, the 18th March 1607, was fifteen years of age.

Brought up, to begin with, like her brothers, Catalina was an adept at all the exercises in which boys are accustomed to indulge. There was nothing obviously feminine about her, and to see her now, crossing the cloister with huge strides, her manly aspect would be bound to strike you most forcibly.

“Spend all my life reciting litanies!” she exclaimed almost out loud. “Ah, my dear aunt, you don’t know yet the stuff your niece is made of!”

For an instant she wavered in her decision, then she marched resolutely back to her cell. Shutting herself in she seized a mirror which she had hidden under her pallet despite the stern commands of the superior, who banished all such things as the most deadly inventions of the Evil One.

Catalina looked and beheld a long and rather thin face, yet a face full of energy and lit up by a pair of strange, dark eyes.

For a moment she thought of the pain she would be giving to her father and mother. She tried to fight against a resolve she had entered upon long since, the resolve to run away; but her hesitation was soon over, and sitting down at her *escritoire* she wrote as follows:

“*Mon père.*

“By the time you get this letter, I shall either be free or dead. I will no longer endure the unjust imprisonment to which you condemn me. Why did you bring me up like my brothers? Why have made me take part in their work and play? Why have made me manly and strong like them, only to compel me, now

that I am fifteen, to do nothing but mumble a lot of interminable prayers? Farewell. Forgive me if you can.

“Your daughter,

“Catalina”

Catalina waited until it was quite dark and the convent was wrapt in silence. She was lucky enough to have a key to the door which opened on to the cloister garden, from which she would reach the open country.

It was a dreary time to wait; but at length the last sound died away. Just as midnight was striking, she slipped out of her cell, and, not meeting a soul, was soon at liberty. Not far from the convent was a wood of chestnut trees, in which, with the aid of a few provisions she had brought with her, she calculated to live a couple of days, just time enough for her to make herself a man's riding suit out of her habit of blue cloth and her petticoat of green flannel. For this purpose she had come armed with scissors, needle, thread and thimble.

So perfect, when she had finished it, was the disguise, that no one would have recognised, in the young man coming away from San Sebastian, the nun Catalina de Eranso.

Her meagre rations exhausted and her purse quite empty, Catalina, having passed through Tolosa and Zamarraga without being molested, came, after six days' tramp, to Vittoria, a little Basque town in Spain, watered by the river Zadorra, a tributary of the Ebro. It was high time she got to some place where she could earn a few pistoles, for the hardships she had experienced in getting across the Sierra de Andra had reduced her to the last extremity.

Fortunately Catalina found a place, straight away, as valet to a certain Francisco di Ceralta, a professor of literature.

The duties in the establishment of this learned gentleman were not particularly onerous. Unfortunately the food was scanty and the wages uncertain.

Catalina was not destined to remain long with her first master, especially as the latter was anxious at all costs to teach her Latin, and made her sit up half the night construing and commentating Cicero, Virgil and Tibullus. But our heroine rebelled, and the lessons were brought to an end by a lively exchange of fisticuffs between master and pupil.

Catalina, still in male attire, now struck up a bargain with a muleteer, who for the price of a dozen reis (which, by the way, she had stolen at Ceralta) undertook to convey her to Valladolid.

Details of Catalina's journey to Valladolid are not forthcoming. All we know is that somewhere or other in the defile of Pancorvo, she fell in with some very shady fellows who made it their sole business to rob travellers passing through old Castille, between Burgos and Palenciar. She seems to have remained with them for one year. The brigands initiated her with skill and thoroughness into the art of fighting, and showed her how most expeditiously to send to their last account all such as resisted their attempts to relieve them of their worldly goods.

Thus, in no long time, Catalina the ex-nun of the abbey of San Sebastian, became a very undesirable rogue and cutpurse.

One year later, in 1608, Catalina appears under the name of Francisco Loyola at Valladolid, where she took

service as page in the home of Don Juan de Idiaquez, the Secretary of State. She had only been there a week when, lo and behold, she discovered her own father in conference with her new master.

For a whole year Miguel de Eranso had been vainly seeking his daughter, who had so mysteriously disappeared. Catalina, to whom freedom was now the breath of life, felt no desire to go back to the convent.

Quickly and secretly she disappeared from Valladolid, taking with her a dozen doubloons which, strange to relate, she had not stolen. Catalina now took the road to Bilbao, "not having the smallest notion" (she writes) "where to go, or what to do in that Biscayan port."

At Bilbao she failed to find work, so she wandered on, begging her bread, and still dressed in man's clothes.

One day, when some children were teasing her and throwing stones, she jumped on one of them and gave him such a thorough hiding that she was arrested and kept in prison for a month.

When she regained her freedom, Catalina quitted the neighbourhood of Bilbao and journeyed, in very evil company, to Estella in Navarre, where, the moment she arrived, she found a berth as page.

There she remained two years. At last, one day, being well furnished with money, she determined, in a fit of bravado, to dress herself up in sumptuous male attire and go and show herself at San Sebastian.

Arrayed in the trappings of a rich lord, she ran across her mother, who peered at her long and attentively, but nevertheless did not recognise her. At Mass, the nuns of her former convent called her by her name; but Catalina feigned not to understand and withdrew with much curtsying.

Her vanity satisfied, Catalina, fearing the consequences of her useless escapade, forthwith quitted San Sebastian for Seville. From Seville she went to Cadiz, where she signed-on as cabin boy on a galley the captain of which, Miguel de Eschazarata, happened by the most extraordinary of chances to be one of our heroine's uncles. But the worthy Miguel never recognised, in the strapping apprentice he was then enlisting, the niece who, for all he knew, was still a nun in the convent at San Sebastian.

Catalina, in her memoirs, has some bitter things to say on the life she was forced to lead on her uncle's ship. It must be mentioned, however, that not a soul on board ever guessed the truth about her sex.

The galley having run into an enemy squadron was beaten and compelled to run ashore on the coast of Mexico.

No sooner was the anchor dropped than Catalina disappeared, as if by magic, in the company of certain undesirables of the crew. With one accord they all went and took service under Captain Eguino, who conveyed the whole of this nice little party to Nombre de Dios.

They fell out with Captain Eguino on the way, and Catalina had him thrashed by his comrades and relieved of 500 piastres. Then she vanished, reappearing again at Panama where she got engaged as a seaman on the ship of Captain Juan de Ibarra. Juan de Ibarra, however, was so terribly close-fisted that Catalina was forced to steal from him in order to provide herself with food and clothing.

At the very first opportunity she got ashore, cut the painter, and obtained employment with a merchant, Urquiza by name.

It is at this point that, Catalina says, her adventures really commenced. Up to now she had merely been getting her hand in. We shall now see her as one of the most redoubtable adventuresses whose exploits are recorded in history.

Having taken ship to accompany Don Juan de Urquiza to the port of Paita on the coast of Peru, the frigate was driven ashore in the Bay of Mantua, at the foot of the Cordillera de Quito. Catalina escaped from the wreck with her master and a few passengers, and succeeded in swimming ashore. Thence the survivors proceeded on foot to Paita, where Juan de Urquiza installed our heroine as head clerk in one of his shops. The business, however, was soon afterwards removed to Sanna, where it thrived amazingly. Catalina has bequeathed to us her accounts, which show that in the first few months of her management she disposed of more than 130,000 piastres' worth of goods.

But this tranquil existence was not at all suited to the adventurous disposition of the quondam nun. She must have something with the salt of peril in it.

“One day, it was a holiday,” she writes, “I was at the theatre, in a seat which I had booked, when a certain Réyès came and sat just in front of me and so close up that I could not see. I asked him to move a little. He gave me an insolent answer and I retorted in the same tone. He then told me to go away and threatened to slash me across the face. I was unarmed, and so I went full of rage and mortification. Some friends came with me and tried to calm me down. Next morning I saw Réyès walking up and down ostentatiously outside my door. Burning with indignation, I shut up shop, took a knife and went with it to the barber's, where I had a

murderous edge put on it. Then I grasped my sword. Before long I met Réyès, who was strolling with one of his men along by the church.

“‘Hullo !’ I said, ‘hullo, Señor Réyès.’ ‘What do you want ?’ he said, turning round. ‘That’s the face that gets cut,’ I said, slashing him across the visage with my knife. He put his hand up to the wound. Meanwhile his companion had drawn and was crossing swords with me. But I gave him a terrible thrust in the left side and he fell. I immediately took refuge in the church.”

In the church Catalina was safe. Never would any *corregidor* of Catholic Spain dare to enter the House of God. Unfortunately, although the priests did all they could to amuse her, Catalina got tired of her surroundings and risked a sortie. That was enough. The *corregidor* and one of his myrmidons had only been waiting for that in order to arrest her and clap her into gaol with manacles about her feet.

But Catalina, with her youth and courage, had touched the hearts of the priests and they pleaded for her against the *corregidor*. They maintained that Catalina had still been within the porch of the sacred edifice when the police had clapped hands on her, and that, that being so, the *corregidor* had plainly acted *ultra vires* in carrying out his arrest on church land. They won the day, and Catalina came forth from prison to re-enter the inviolable sanctuary.

But this was only exchanging one prison for another. This one might be pleasanter, but it was not going to keep our heroine long, for she was all the more eager to get out now that she felt the danger of such a proceeding was both near and real. On the one side was

the *corregidor*, on the other Réyès and his friend, who never let a morning pass without threatening her with death.

Hastening from Paita at the news of the perils which were threatening his clerk, Juan de Urquiza landed one morning at Sanna to get him out of his scrape. Poor Juan de Urquiza, however, devised a plan that displayed more goodwill than imagination. To set Catalina free from her persecutors, the good man merely proposed to her that she should marry a certain young lady of the place, Dona Beatrix de Cárdenas, whose family were all-powerful there.

Catalina pretended to fall in with the suggestion, and to her, in the church, they brought a charming young damsel into whose ear she breathed innumerable airy nothings. When it became clear to everyone that the marriage was well on the way, Beatrix' father appeased the *corregidor*, restrained the anger of Réyès and his friends, and came, in great pomp, to seek out the temerarious young Spaniard in her pious abode.

That same evening Catalina disappeared.

We come across her a few months later at Trujillo, a little Peruvian port, at the foot of the Western Cordilleras. There, she was looking after one of Juan de Urquiza's shops, for that gentleman, though he could not make out why she had fled on the eve of her marriage with Beatrix, had nevertheless forgiven her that escapade. Catalina had been settled for some two months in Trujillo, when a negro came to warn her that some men carrying bucklers were desirous of encountering her. It was Réyès and his henchmen, and among them the friend who had been so grievously wounded by the nun.

Accompanied by one of her companions, François

Zérain, Catalina went out and immediately a furious battle began. Réyes' friend was mortally wounded.

The combat over, our heroine decided on immediate flight. Alas, the *corregidor* of Trujillo was too quick for her. Catalina was arrested and bound before even she could wash the blood of her foes from her weapons, her arms and her clothes.

Nevertheless the nun's good genius was not slumbering.

"While the *corregidor* was taking me off to prison," she writes, "he put some questions to me, asking where I came from, where I had been born, etc. When I told him I was a Biscayan, he answered me in that tongue and told me, when passing by the cathedral, to slip the pinions by which I was bound and take sanctuary in the church. I did not need twice telling and bounded into the church, while he stood without stamping and shouting and pretending to be in a great choler."

And now it was once more Don Juan de Urquiza who came to our heroine's assistance, smuggled her out of the church, gave her letters of recommendation, 2,600 piastres and sent her away to Lima.

Lima, at this time, was already an important city. It boasted an archbishopric, a cathedral church like that at Seville, five "dignities," ten "Cannonica," six entire and six half "rations," four *curés*, seven parishes, twelve convents of monks and of nuns, eight hospitals, a hermitage, a university and a grand inquisitor. Like the rest of Peru, it was under the governance of a viceroy and a royal audience.

Engaged as a clerk at a salary of 600 piastres by a rich merchant to whom Urquiza had recommended her, Catalina remained for nine months in that employment without getting herself talked about. Unfortunately

one of her master's daughters suddenly fell in love with our heroine. There was some talk of an eventual marriage. Catalina had to quit—both her job and Lima.

Realising that her disguise was a perpetual menace to her in more or less sophisticated regions, but terribly averse even to the bare idea of exchanging it for skirt and petticoat, Catalina enrolled in a company that was being raised for service in Chili. Judge of Catalina's stupefaction when she discovered that the troops were captained by no less a person than Miguel de Eranso, her own brother. Happily all the adventures she had been through had so transformed and "mannified" her features and general appearance that Miguel, when he came to question her about her country and family, as he did all his men, had not the least idea who she was. On the contrary, learning that this new militiaman was a Biscayan, he asked her for news of the country, questioned her about his father, mother and sister, even about that little Catalina who was a nun in a convent at San Sebastian. Catalina answered as best she could, without giving him any clue. The review went on, and when it was over Miguel de Eranso took Catalina back with him and made her sit at his table. The young soldier pleased him so much that he went to the Governor after dinner and asked him, as a special favour, if he would change his compatriot's company. The Governor at first refused, but afterwards consented.

For three whole years Catalina never once betrayed her secret. The affection was great between the brother and the sister, but one day the latter offering some criticism on some sentimental liaison in which Miguel was involved, an argument arose, which soon developed into a quarrel and finally into an affair of pistols. The

Governor decided that the soldier was in the wrong, and, as a disciplinary measure, he was sent to the fortress at Paicabi, where, from the very outset, existence proved extremely painful. "We were always on the *qui vive*," says Catalina. "We were continually compelled to beat off attacks by the Indians. All the forces in Chili came to join us in finishing off the common enemy. Altogether, in the Plain of Valdivia, we numbered some 5,000 men.

"Notwithstanding these forces, the Indians succeeded in gaining possession of Valdivia and sacked it.

"Several engagements followed, and in the end the Indians were mastered. For some weeks we were unmolested, but after that the Indians, having received further reinforcements, returned to the charge, threw us into disorder, killed a large number of our men and officers and, among others, my *alferez* (lieutenant). They also captured our colours. Seeing our officer being carried off, I and two other mounted men dashed into the thick of the fight, giving and taking innumerable blows, overthrowing all that came in our way.

"One of us was killed; but without staying our fierce career, we clove a way towards the captured flag. There my comrade was flung to earth by a thrust from a lance and I was wounded in the leg. But I slew the Indian chief who was grasping the flag and snatched it from him. Then, driving spurs into my horse again, and rushing into the opposing crowd, striking blows on every side, wounding and slaying, myself bleeding from a spear wound in the left shoulder, I succeeded at length in regaining our lines. As soon as I had done so, I fell down unconscious. They hastened to succour me and when I opened my eyes I beheld my brother, and that

brought me great consolation. He had forgiven me the quarrel we had had, and the instant he had learned the danger to which I was exposed he insisted on trying to join me, though he looked on me merely as a fellow-countryman. I was soon cured of my wound. For nine months we remained encamped in the same place. My brother obtained from the Governor the ensign which I had recovered and I was appointed *alferez* in the company of Alonzo Moreno."

The blows given, or taken, by Catalina in duels or skirmishes are innumerable. The rank of ensign, to which she had been promoted, brought about no change in her habits.

In the course of an argument she had in a gaming-house with one of her fellow-gamblers, she ran him through the body. An auditor-general, who tried to arrest her, suffered a similar fate. She took refuge in a convent and had to remain there six months. Then she came out, but only, alas, to become a fratricide.

She had received a card from a friend of the auditor-general who knew where she was concealed. Couched in insolent terms, the message challenged her to come immediately to a certain lonely spot to answer for the death of the two men slain by her. Although her heart misgave her, Catalina could not have it said of her that she lacked courage, and at nightfall, despite the prayers and protests of the monks, she betook herself to the spot indicated. There she found her adversary and, without further introduction forthwith began to fray. A few passes, and she had wounded him to the death. The unhappy man fell to the earth. Catalina rushed towards him, fain to learn his name, and he with his dying breath answered faintly, "Captain Miguel Eranso."

Catalina had slain her own brother !

She records the deed in her memoirs with great simplicity. "I remained dumbfounded," she writes.

After this she returned to the monastery in which she had taken refuge, witnessed the interment of her brother and lingered eight months longer in that pious abode. Then she disappeared anew.

She went first to Valdivia, then to Tucuman. Valdivia, which is situated on the sea and commands the plain extending to the west of Mount Lanin and the volcano Orsono, is cursed with a terrible climate.

To get from Valdivia to Tucuman, Catalina followed the coast-line for a great distance, then made her way over the plain and crossed the Andes. It was a perilous journey.

On the road she fell in with two soldiers who, as a consequence of misdeeds very like her own, were fleeing from the strong arm of the law. The three fugitives exchanged stories and swore to stand by one another.

"We had horses," she said, "muskets, weapons of steel, and the high protection of God. We began to ascend the mountain range by a slope of more than thirty leagues without discovering on that journey, or in the 300 leagues which we afterwards traversed, any other nutriment than roots and a few small animals. We came upon water only at the rarest intervals. Now and again we descried some Indians in the offing, but they fled at our approach. At last, driven to desperation by hunger, we were reduced to eating one of our horses. Then the second had to go, and finally the third and last. Continuing our journey on foot, famished and utterly worn out, we scarcely had strength to keep our feet. Soon we entered upon a region so lofty and so

cold that we were frozen. All of a sudden we saw two men, half lying, half sitting on a rock. The sight filled us with joy. Rushing forward we hailed them, and asked what they were doing there. They made no answer. We went close up to them. They were dead, frozen stiff, their mouths open and drawn in a sort of hideous grin, and the sight filled us with a terrible dread.

“Three nights later one of my companions died on a rock on which we had cast ourselves down to sleep. Still we went doggedly and wearily on. Next day, about four o'clock in the afternoon my sole surviving comrade fell weeping to the ground. He could go no further and shortly afterwards breathed his last. He had eight piastres in his pocket. Utterly sick at heart, I sat down against a tree and gave way to tears, the first time I had ever wept in my life. I recited the rosary and commended my spirit to the Blessed Virgin and to the glorious Saint Joseph, her spouse. After that I struggled to my feet and resumed the march. The temperature had completely changed. It dawned on me that I was leaving Chili behind me and approaching Tucuman. The cold I had no longer to fear, but I was breaking down through hunger and fatigue.

“Next day I saw two men on horseback riding towards me. Friends or foes? I knew not. In my uncertainty I endeavoured to adjust my arquebus, but I was too weak. They drew near and questioned me. They were Christians. It was as if the heavens had opened.”

These good folk conducted Catalina to their mistress, who had a farm in the district. The latter, filled with pity at the deplorable condition in which our heroine found herself, tended her most kindly, but never discovered her sex.

Having got over her fatigue, Catalina soon recovered her good humour. Indeed, she presented an exterior so honest and so brave that the mistress of the house offered her marriage, on her own account first, and, since that met with no success, on her daughter's. The latter proposal Catalina pretended to accept. This move had an ulterior motive. Catalina, in brief, was sorely in need of new clothes and financial reinforcements. The plan worked to perfection, and once more, on the eve of the wedding, Catalina disappeared without anyone guessing her secret.

On reaching La Plata, Catalina took service with a syndic of the city, in the capacity of house-steward. But this peaceful occupation was soon destined to be replaced by one of a more warlike nature. The city just then was living in a state of terror owing to the outrages perpetrated by Alonzo Ibbanès and his lawless followers, with whom its forces were ceaselessly, and for the most part unsuccessfully, engaged. In a few days Catalina, at the head of a handful of men, had Ibbanès at her mercy, put him to flight and departed on an expedition against the Indians, who were harrying the country round.

Returning to La Plata full of glory, but devoid of funds, our heroine was obliged to accept a post as train-bearer in the house of a lady of great wealth, Dona Catarina de Chaves. This amiable person, who lived a gay and not very reputable life, was consumed with a passionate hatred for one of her rivals, famous throughout La Plata for her beauty. One night Dona Catarina summons her lacquey, slips a purse into one hand and a poniard into the other and tells him to go and spoil her rival's beauty. Catalina, rather tickled at this rivalry,

accepts both presents, insinuates himself into the bedroom of the too successful beauty and with marked address scores her a cross on either cheek.

Alas for her, the quondam nun had not sufficiently mistrusted the execrable Catarina de Chaves, who the very next day went weeping to her rival's bedside and hinted that it would not be a matter of insuperable difficulty to discover the perpetrator of the abominable outrage.

She dashes off a written statement to the *corregidor*—and lo, Catalina is under lock and key!

And forthwith they prepare for her the appalling apparatus of the “Question.”

She already had the garotte about her neck, the wooden wedges thrust between her toes, the lead, the pitch and the water were beginning to boil on the executioner's furnaces, when suddenly the fact that she was a Biscayan once more miraculously intervened to save her from the most horrible of tortures.

Having escaped, as by a hair's breadth that appalling danger, Catalina quitted La Plata and made her way on foot to Las Charcas, where she became a shepherdess. As the sequel to a quarrel with a sheep-dealer, the poniard flashed anew from its sheath and our heroine was compelled to take refuge in a church until such time as she could manage to get to Pisco, a little Peruvian mission station.

There she was involved in another gambling dispute with the usual sequels, viz. a duel and the death of her adversary. There having been no witnesses to the affair, Catalina thought it unnecessary to disappear. As a result, she was denounced, arrested and condemned to death. The intervention of a Biscayan nobleman once

more came in the nick of time and she was granted a pardon.

From Pisco, Catalina betakes herself to Cochabamba in Bolivia, where she lives by her wits. Her captain's uniform and her soldier-like bearing procure her endless meetings with the fair sex. She was lavish of smaller favours, but extraordinarily niggard with the big ones. One day as she was passing along beneath a balcony a beautiful woman made her appearance thereon, weeping, waving her arms about and cried out to her :

“ Señor Capitan, take me away with you ; my husband is going to kill me.”

Just then two monks fling themselves upon Catalina, slip a purse into her hands and whisper :

“ Take her away from here.”

Intrigued by the unusual character of this adventure, Catalina, without a moment's hesitation, takes charge of the weeping lady. The two women take the road to La Plata. As ill luck would have it, the husband, who was greatly attached to his wife, followed close upon their heels and overtook the fugitives at the gates of La Plata. They nevertheless contrived to get away and Catalina conducted her charge to the Augustinian convent. Once the latter had been put in a place of safety, our heroine sought out the husband and a furious duel ensued, which continued right on into the interior of a church.

To fight a duel in a church was an unprecedented crime, and Catalina was hounded down alike by the Bishop and the Grand Inquisitor. She was able to prove, however, that she had only brought succour to a woman in peril of death and that it was the husband who had pushed her into the church. The situation was

thus reversed. It was the husband that mounted the stake while Catalina quietly resumed the course of her adventurous existence.

From La Plata, Catalina went to La Paz in Bolivia "where," she says, "I kept quiet for a time."

She kept quiet until the day when arguing a little too emphatically with the *corregidor*, Antonio Barraza, who gave her the lie, and a blow with his bâton in the face, she promptly ran him through and killed him.

Yet another death-sentence.

It seemed as though nothing would save her this time, and nothing would have, save the diabolical subterfuge which she had long thought out and which she put into execution the very day when, barefooted, with the rope round her neck, she was about to communicate before surrendering to her executioners.

When the Host was offered her, she took it and then waited a moment :

"Then," she tells us, "I spat out the Host which was in my mouth and caught it in the palm of my right hand, at the same time crying in a loud voice : '*Je m'appelle Eglise.*' Immediately there was a tumult and uproar and everyone began calling out 'heretic'. The priest gave orders that no one should come near me. He finished his Mass and then there entered the Lord Bishop, Dom Fray Domingo de Valderrama, in company with the Governor. A great number of priests and other folk gathered there ; tapers were lit, the dais was brought out and I was led in procession. Arriving before the altar, all present fell on their knees. A priest in full vestments took the host from my hand and placed it in the tabernacle. Then they scraped my hand, washed it

several times and wiped it dry. Then everyone was sent out of the church, and I remained behind."

For this stratagem which succeeded so marvellously, Catalina does not take the responsibility. She fathers it on a Franciscan friar who gave the last ghostly comfort in her prison.

Alone in the church, what time the mob without were angrily murmuring, while the Governor was furiously demanding the return of his prisoner, while the Bishop and his deacons were searching diligently in the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers how to deal with so unheard-of a situation, Catalina awaited her doom unmoved.

For a whole month she waited.

She had been installed in a sacristy and the servants of the church knew not whether it was a saint or a demon with whom they had to do.

As neither the Scriptures nor the Fathers offered any solution of the matter, the Bishop deemed the best way to rid himself of the penitent was after all to send her to be hanged somewhere else. And so, right before the beards and noses of the men of the law and the men of war, Catalina, disguised in a monk's habit, mounted on a mule, with a well-lined purse, quitted La Paz and went to take up her abode at Cuzco.

At Cuzco she was arrested on unfounded suspicions. She immediately escaped and embarked on a ship of war sailing to Paita. The ship was attacked by the Dutch and sent to the bottom, Catalina being taken prisoner. She was soon released, and a little later we find her again at Cuzco, where she was grievously wounded by a man who was popularly known as Le Cid. Her wound presented symptoms so grave that

the surgeon refused to operate until she had made her confession.

Catalina at this moment was feeling so weak, so near to death, that she divulged to the priest the secret of her sex, which until then she had guarded with such rigid jealousy. That avowal made, the surgeon operated and saved her life.

Nursed back to health, Catalina at once resumes her male costume and starts off in quest of fresh adventures. Alas, her exploits are known by this time throughout the length and breadth of South America. The *corregidores* of the towns through which her road lay, having had word of her frequent collisions with the law, laid ambushes to entrap her. But she was always one too many for the gendarmes. One night, however, at Guamanga, she was completely hemmed in and there was nothing for it but to yield or die. She preferred death. Already she had put the pistol to her brow when the Bishop of the place appeared on the scene attended by four servants bearing torches. Said the holy man, addressing her :

“ Señor Ensign, give me your weapons.”

Impressed by the gentleness of the voice Catalina obeyed and went with the Bishop to his palace. There, when he had comforted her, the man of God spoke to her at length and with such kindness that the adventuress opened her heart entirely to him, recounted all the details of her life, signified her willingness to communicate, and to go back, once for all to female attire.

Shortly afterwards Catalina entered the convent of Santa Clara of Guamanga.

“ The news of this event,” she says, “ ran like wildfire up and down the land and caused throughout the

‘Indies’ a wave of universal astonishment, not only among those who had known me before, but among those who had subsequently become acquainted with my adventures. Five months went by when my sainted Bishop died a sudden death and left me with a great sense of loss.”

As our heroine, thus deprived of her tutor, suddenly began to betray the premonitory symptoms of an approaching escapade, the Superior of Santa Clara appealed in her dilemma to the authority of the Archbishop of Lima.

“It’s a case of the wolf in the fold,” wrote this devout woman. “Your lordship alone can perchance prevent the return of these evil instincts.”

The Archbishop gave ear to his servant’s supplications and decided to place Catalina under strict surveillance. Although he was fain not to doubt the sincerity of her conversion, he sent to Guamanga, six priests and six men armed to the teeth, to escort the litter of the headstrong nun.

Catalina set out for Lima, where she was received the same evening as she arrived at the table of the Archbishop and Viceroy. For several days she had no other occupation than to recount, detail by detail, the story of her multitudinous enterprises, delighting all who heard her, even those who, long ago at Lima, had most cruelly suffered from them. But now, when it was no longer a man but a woman in the case, old scores were soon wiped out.

Then interest in Catalina began to subside. She was given to understand that the hour had come for her to bury herself for good in the Convent of the Most Holy Trinity.

Catalina displayed all the outward signs of obedience, yet strained every nerve to get over from Spain the documents necessary to prove that at the convent of San Sebastian she had never been a professed nun. The documents arrived, the Bishop had to give way, and freedom was restored to Catalina on condition that she returned to Spain forthwith and forbore henceforth to dress in male attire.

Catalina promised all that was asked of her, embarked on a vessel bound for Spain, and when the ship was only one day out at sea, thrashed three officers with whom she was playing cards, and slashed the Captain's face with a pocket-knife, with the result that she was promptly dumped ashore on the coast of Peru.

She re-embarked a few days later in another vessel, which took her aboard on the express condition that she did not leave her cabin for the whole of the voyage. To be on the safe side, they locked her in.

When the ship arrived at Cadiz, she was restored to liberty. Cadiz always has loved masques and masquerades, and loves them still. When they heard tell of the exploits of this passenger from America, the whole town got up a gigantic fête, with processions, dances and all the usual paraphernalia.

When she came to go ashore, Catalina had flung her woman's dress to the devil and was once more flaunting it in the gorgeous trappings of a gallant cavalier. Thus attired, she set out for Seville, Madrid, Pampeluna, filling the hearts of the girls with love, of their gallants, with terror.

From Pampeluna she wanted to go to Rome through France, but she was arrested as a spy. Set at liberty, she was received by the Viceroy of Pau and Governor of

Bayonne, the Comte d'Agramont, who flirted with her, gave her a horse and a sum of one hundred crowns.

Attacked by robbers and completely stripped of all her belongings just outside Pau, she went back to Madrid where she was presented to the King. The latter, forgetting her delinquencies and remembering only the heroism she had displayed in combating the enemies of Spain in Peru, conferred upon her honours, a pension and a grant of thirty ducats.

Catalina, still clinging to the idea of a journey to Rome, again set out for that objective. Except for a duel at Genoa, she reached Rome without incident. Pope Urban VIII, who received her in audience, authorised her to retain her male attire, recommending her in future not to give offence to her neighbour.

As a matter of course Catalina had been inscribed in the civic register as a Roman citizen.

Catalina died under mysterious circumstances, probably in America, where she had taken service once more in the army of general Miguel de Eschazarata.

The date of her death is unknown. At all events it is subsequent to 1645, since at that time Father Fray Diego of Seville writes that "several times at Vera Cruz he saw the Menja-alferez, dona Catalina de Eranso." The reverend father adds that she possessed a team of mules and negroes by means of which she transported her baggage from place to place.

Of her inner life, of what Catalina really thought, of the things she really loved we are utterly without knowledge. The soldier-nun gives us no clue to that enigma. Stories of fighting, tales of derring-do seem to have been the only things that interested her. When she left the convent at San Sebastian and indued for the first time

the garments of the opposite sex, she seems to have put off, and for ever, the woman with the woman's clothes. The transformation was complete. Her mien, her countenance never once betrayed her.

In a letter dated from Rome, the 11th June 1626, Pedro de Lavalle has thus described her :

“ She is tall and strongly built for a woman, so much so that she can easily pass for a man. As to her face, she is not ugly, but she is no longer beautiful. Her hair is black and cut short like a man's and comes down over her forehead in accordance with the present fashion. She dresses like a Spaniard, wears a sword with an air as befits her profession, carried her head a little bent forward, more, one supposes, on account of the fatigues she has gone through as a soldier, than from the indolence of city ways. It is only from her hands that you can tell she is a woman, for they are short and fat, though strong enough.”

That is the only likeness of Catalina that we possess : too simple and too brief a one to permit of our drawing from it any subtleties of psychological inference.

## CHAPTER VI

### MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN, SWASHBUCKLER AND OPERATIC STAR

**I**N the month of March 1691, a mysterious fire occurred at the Convent of the Visitandines at Avignon. In the general panic, two young women escaped ; at the moment no one paid any particular attention to them, but, when order was restored and an inquiry was instituted into the causes of the disaster, one of them was formally accused of setting fire to the sacred edifice and of a horrible crime into the bargain.

In the first edition of Madame Dunoyer's letters published in 1705, there is one of them that reads as follows :

“ A nun who had become enamoured of a gentleman who had whispered his love for her at the grille, resolved to scale the convent walls and rejoin the swain. Love, they say, burns fiercely beneath the nun's veil and the monk's habit. Thus did the nun make every attempt she could think of to gain her freedom. She told her lover of a plan, but he thought it would be very difficult to carry it out. Yet, whatever the obstacles, Love, they say, will always find out a way.

“ And now what do you think our nun thought of ? You shall hear. She told her lover to be next night at a certain spot, and all she wanted him to bring with him was a pair of good horses. She told him she had not only got hold of a scheme that would enable her to get away, but that no one would ever know anything about it. She told him not to ask her to go into details, but just to see

that everything needful for the journey was got ready. She then left him, in order to put her plan into execution, and I think you will agree it was a pretty bold one.

“ That day there had been a funeral in the community. One of the Sisters had been buried and the grave had not yet been sealed. When all was quiet in the convent, she got into the place of sepulture, bore the dead nun to her cell and laid the corpse on her bed. Then she set fire to the cell. By means of a ladder which she had managed to obtain, and which she contrived to drag up after her, she scaled the garden wall and flung herself into the arms of her lover, who was waiting for her burning with impatience. They lost no time in putting as much distance between themselves and the convent as they possibly could and their journey was the happiest imaginable. When the alarm of fire was raised in the convent all the nuns had hurried to the burning cell, and as the dead nun was attired in her habit and was already half consumed by the flames, they never had the slightest doubt that she who was now the runaway was really the victim of the disaster. While the poor souls were bewailing her lot and saying prayers for the repose of her soul, the object of all these lamentations was occupied with a very different sort of business.

“ So you see that this scheme not only enabled her to go clear away, but preserved her reputation from all blemish.

“ As soon as the lovers were beyond the reach of pursuit, they duly entered into the bond of matrimony, but not under their own names. The gentleman took up some sort of business career and amassed a lot of money. They had several children who would have been very rich if their mother's scruples had not exposed them to

ruin by reason of the legal proceedings which are now in question. The woman's husband died, and she was so grief-stricken at losing him, that she also resolved to die to the world. She therefore withdrew to a convent, where remorse for the iniquities of her past life led her to make a confession which her children would have been better without, for by proclaiming herself a nun, she proclaimed them bastards and, therefore, debarred from inheriting the money. The dead man's relatives, when all this came to their ears, put in a claim to the estate, which the children are naturally exceedingly loth to part with. What the result of the litigation will be depends on the verdict of the Parliament of Toulouse. Suppose the case is adjourned, as some say it will be, well, we shall hear all about that after the holidays, for we are now about to start getting ready to go into the country."

In 1705, Mademoiselle Maupin was one of the leading singers at the Paris Opera. As she was known to be as sharp with the women as she was cruel with the men, and as the sting of her repartee was no less feared than the power of her arm, which could wield a sword with deadly effect, we may be sure that Madame Dunoyer, though she found it impossible to hold her tongue, fully realised that, when referring to la Maupin's early adventures at Avignon, it would be prudent, if not necessary, to conceal the name and quality of her *dramatis personæ*.

In 1702, a Chevalier de Mailly published the story of a certain female captain well known in Paris by the blue riband she wore as a sash and by the extraordinary costume with which she was bedizened. The book, however, was no sooner out than it was pounced upon, probably by the friends of Mademoiselle Maupin.

Letters, anecdotes, lampoons, songs poured forth pell-mell regarding this celebrated actress, but always and everywhere she was spoken of by a pseudonym and no one ever dared to refer to her by her real name.

Madame Dunoyer's story, though lacking in some interesting details, seems on the whole an authentic account of one of la Maupin's numerous adventures.

This remarkable woman, who bore off all the prizes that fall to the prettiest of women and the smartest of men, scintillates with extraordinary vivacity among the minor actors in the history of France.

Monsieur d'Aubigny, the father of Mademoiselle Maupin was secretary to the Comte d'Armagnac.

He was, according to all accounts, a dashing fellow, "as brave as steel," as the saying goes, an adept with the cards, with the rapier and with women, a ruffler that snapped his fingers alike at God and the Devil.

Mademoiselle Maupin was born in 1670.

From her very tenderest years, M. d'Aubigny gave his daughter a manly education, in which a taste for literature, for ancient history, noble feats of arms and manly exercises was harmoniously encouraged. His position as secretary to the Comte d'Armagnac afforded M. d'Aubigny many valuable facilities for the education of his daughter, who counted among her professors some of the most famous men of her time both in literature and the art of horsemanship.

By the time she was twelve, Mademoiselle d'Aubigny knew all there was to know about the art of fencing. Jean and François Rousseau, André Vernesson de Liancourt, *maître d'armes*, had instructed her in their most dazzling passes.

When she was fourteen, Mademoiselle d'Aubigny, a



MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN



tall, strong, strapping girl, as skilled in seduction as in the art of attack and defence, conquered the affections of Monsieur d'Armagnac, to whom her father could scarcely refuse her.

M. d'Armagnac, having launched the young woman in town and Court, soon found himself constrained by the disabilities of advancing age to find a husband for his protégée.

Alas, on his very wedding night, Monsieur Maupin, a man of peaceable and gentle disposition, had to endure a sample of his wife's ungovernable temper and no less ungovernable tongue. That day, and for many a subsequent one, he did his utmost, by pandering to her every whim, to conciliate his wife's good graces. It was love's labour lost. Mademoiselle Maupin, while thanking him for his troubles, did all she knew to be rid of him. She was thinking she would have to poison him when, luckily for the hapless husband, some influential friends procured him a berth as a "deputy" something or other in the provinces. With all speed he was bundled into a carriage and, for some time to come, was heard of no more.

The Comte d'Armagnac considered that Mademoiselle Maupin had been in a great hurry to be rid of a very accommodating husband—an attentive yet admirably blind custodian. He therefore gave his protégée a terrific dressing-down and she returned him tit for tat by declaring that the meagre emoluments she enjoyed did not suffice for keeping up an establishment.

M. d'Armagnac argued, pleaded, stormed. It was no good. The banished husband remained where he was.

Once more a free woman, Mademoiselle Maupin tore back to her riding-schools and her fencing saloons. Her

bellicose disposition developed to such an extent that she would stop people in the street, slap their faces, if they were shopkeepers or servants, and make them draw if they wore the garb of gentlemen.

It was about this time that la Maupin encountered a southern fencing-master named Serannes whose talents and graces so bedazzled the *danseuse* that she decided to go into partnership with him in organising a series of fencing bouts for which the public would have to pay for admission. But these plans were all upset by M. de la Reynie, lieutenant of police, who loathed swashbucklers with a bitter loathing. A big gun in the police can always put a spoke into honest folks' business, and M. de la Reynie proceeded to put the closure on Serannes. He accused him of complicity in some shady affair or other and the duellist had to say good-bye to Paris.

Serannes, however, won the rubber, for he took Mademoiselle Maupin with him. M. d'Armagnac, who had been at the back of M. de la Reynie's intervention, never dreamt that things would take this turn and flew into a terrible rage.

At Dijon the couple, discovering that some persons in the Comte d'Armagnac's pay were on their track, promptly clapped on a disguise ; he gummed on a beard and moustache, she slipped into doublet and hose.

A few months later we meet them again at Marseilles. The lady, most skilfully disguising her sex, was carrying all before her in this ancient city of the sea, winning the men by her talents with the foil and the women by her elegant appearance and engaging address.

Serannes had told la Maupin all sorts of tales about his fine estates in the sunny South. Alas, they all turned out to be the merest castles in Spain.

Funds were getting low, and to fill the void in the money-bags the young woman redoubled the number of fencing displays. They were marvellous exhibitions, and Marseilles has not forgotten them yet.

“Go on with you ; that’s no woman,” said some.

“She is, I tell you,” would come the reply.

And they would make bets on the matter.

One day, put off her stroke by the people in the room shouting out that she was a man, she was pinked again and again. At once she stopped the bout and kicking off her clothes gave the company ocular evidence of her veritable sex.

After that their stock went up sky-high and the couple raked in the money.

On the 28th June 1685, Pierre Gaultier a friend of Lulli’s, opened an Academy of Music at Marseilles.

Mademoiselle Maupin at once resolved to lay aside the sword and make her bow on the boards of the new theatre. She went through a sort of competitive audition before Gaultier and some local musicians. Her contralto impressed them very considerably. At that time contralto parts were taken exclusively by castrated males. It was a revelation to find that a real woman could fulfil a rôle in opera till then reserved for those who were delicately called “the maimed ones.”

The public début of Mademoiselle Maupin took place under the name of Mademoiselle d’Aubigny. Both in serious and comic rôles she was an enormous success. And her companion also, who had been taken on by Gaultier, acquitted himself with credit in the parts allotted to him.

For some months the couple enjoyed a halcyon calm to which they had not always been accustomed. Not

only did Mademoiselle Maupin forget her bachelor education and play the soft and tender yoke-fellow towards Serannes, but the money flowed into the treasury in amazing abundance.

Unfortunately the Maupin was endowed with a dual personality, and held very definite views concerning male and female beauty. One day she decided she was sick of men in general and of Serannes in particular. What a piquant contrast it would be if a virile woman like herself were to show herself about town in company with some blond-tressed maiden. How it would show up her dark-hued charms. This dubious idea the Maupin was for putting into immediate execution.

It was in the first tier of boxes at the theatre where she was singing that Mademoiselle Maupin discovered the ideal, the faultless blonde of whom she was in search.

This was a young lady who went to the theatre with her father and mother and was to be seen several times a week in the costliest boxes of the Opera. She seemed to look at la Maupin with an expression in which admiration and passionate affection were equally intermingled.

Mademoiselle Maupin quickly sensed the promptings of love which began to ferment within her and immediately the masculine attributes slumbering in her female breast were aroused to activity.

After a while she succeeded in discovering the fair one's address, schemed to get a word with her, obtained an interview and bewildered the poor child with her passionate declarations.

The parents soon discovered the unwholesome flame which was consuming their child, and accordingly put a sudden stop to her theatre-going. That troubled la

Maupin but little, for she arranged to meet the young woman at a friend's house.

However, the parents deemed it advisable to cut the whole connexion, and all possibility of its renewal, by taking the young person to Avignon and placing her in a convent there.

Two days later Mademoiselle Maupin had found out the road which her beloved had taken, thrown up her appointment at the Academy of Music and, dressed in men's clothes, was galloping along the banks of the Rhone, making post-haste for Avignon.

Once in the City of the Popes, la Maupin readily discovered her inamorata's retreat. She was in safe keeping at the Visitandines, a very rigid order to whose house there was no admission save for the unquestionably devout.

La Maupin knocked at the gate of the Visitandines and convinced them of her piety. With this object she had discarded her male attire and donned the modest raiment of the pious devotee.

She told the prioress a most touching story, in which was not a word of truth, said that she was a young orphan, and that she had come to Avignon there to await the arrival of an uncle of hers who was to take her to Burgundy. Fearful of the snares and pitfalls of life in a great city, she had come to ask the prioress to be so kind as to let her wait for her uncle in the peace and quietude of her holy house.

The good sister was deeply moved by all this candour and humility, and taking the penitent's clasped hands in hers, drew her to her bosom, imprinted a kiss upon her chaste brow and promised her aid and succour as long as she remained in the City of the Popes.

Thereupon the Maupin was led away to a whitewashed cell, in which she lived for a whole week betraying every sign of ardent devotion.

Our heroine's virtues were the one topic of conversation among the Sisters. She lay low, embalmed in litanies, incense and holy water.

But the wolf was soon to awaken. Indeed he had awakened, but in secret, and no one knew anything about it. The wolf had found out the sheep once more, but within their lay-sisters' habit, their gestures were so edifying and their attitude so modest that the most knowing among them would never have divined the storms that were raging within those two bosoms. Alas, the Maupin soon began to feel a longing to get away. This love-making in a convent somehow seemed to lack a tang. That is how it was she conceived the idea of burning the place down.

A young nun having died, the Maupin carried the corpse into her friend's cell, and having despoiled her of her habit, destroyed all trace of her profanation. She put it in the bed of her "lover" and set fire to the bedding.

In a very short time the cell was in flames as well as the passage that led to it, and a little later the whole place was in an uproar, nothing but screaming, shouting, running hither and thither. While panic thus reigned in the convent, la Maupin and her friend were scouring along the king's highway.

When the fire had been put out at the Visitandines, the nuns discovered the cruel trick that had been played on them.

It is not recorded where the two women went to hide their shameful passion, but we know that la Maupin

was condemned to be burned alive on a charge of contumacy.

But who would have recognised in the brilliant cavalier who rode alone one fine morning into Paris, the pious orphan of the Visitandines of Avignon. Her accomplice had disappeared, abandoned by her seducer, and in pitiable plight was compelled to creep back to the bosom of her family.

Such was the adventure which befell the fair Maupin at Avignon, the adventure to which allusion was made in the letter quoted at the beginning of our story which we owe to the pen of the loquacious, but very cautious, Madame Dunoyer.

Mademoiselle Maupin was not to remain very long in Paris. Her outrageous conduct at Avignon might any moment get to the ears of the Paris police, and the singing bird reflected that in the absence of her protector, the Comte d'Armagnac, she would run a great risk of being sent to rot on a bed of prison straw. Once more therefore she took the highway and before long we come across her in Orleans and then at other towns along the Loire. Her position, so far as money was concerned, was anything but brilliant, and she herself confesses later on that so desperate and pitiable was her plight that she was compelled to go about singing in hostleries and taverns to get her daily bread. But so fond was she of masquerading now in this dress, now in that, that she always carried about with her the wherewithal to enable her to appear now as woman, now as man.

Her triumphs at the Marseilles Academy of Music now belonged to the dim and distant past. Her public now consisted mainly of vagabonds and tipplers, who assuredly never suspected that in the singer or the songstress whom

they applauded, they were listening to one of the most amazing personalities of their generation.

Ill luck continued to dog her footsteps and the Maupin was reduced to the degradation of begging her bread.

Happily her star still shone with watchful eye. At Poitiers she fell in with a hoary old drunkard who, instinctively divining her genius as an actress and paying due homage to her talents as a singer, guided her steps in a new direction.

“I happened,” she writes, “to find myself, in the course of my wanderings, at Poitiers. One evening when I was dining in a rather inferior sort of cabaret, I somehow felt rather pleased with myself and my singing was a great success. Among the audience was a man of fifty or thereabouts with a remarkably intelligent expression but with a countenance so flushed and bloated that you could have seen he was a drunkard a mile off. What drew my attention to him all the more was the strange fashion in which he was attired. His shabby coat was unbuttoned enough to allow a glimpse of a sort of ancient vest or waistcoat of rusty blue velvet on which were traces of some kind of antique embroidery. This individual, who thus used up in ordinary life the discarded fineries of the theatre, was an old comedian of the provinces. Recently his inveterate indulgence in the bottle had brought about his expulsion from the local theatre. His name was Maréchal.

“His disposition being naturally gay and genial, his company was greatly in demand among the moneyed idlers of the place, and thus it came about that he was always more or less mellow, when, that is to say, he was not completely drunk.

“Maréchal having listened to me with great attention,

did not clap when I had finished but came straight over to me and said :

“ ‘ I am an old comedian ; I know something about singing, and when anyone has got talent. If you liked, *ma petite*, before four or five years are up you could be the foremost artist at the Paris Opera. I’ll give you some lessons. I’ve got nothing to do. . . . It will amuse me.’

“ I gratefully accepted his offer.

“ As a musician Maréchal was good ; as a comedian he was superb. No one was ever more thoroughly acquainted with the innumerable resources of his art. The broadest farce, the loftiest flights of the higher drama all came within his compass.

“ How it came about that a man of his extraordinary gifts and intelligence should have never become anything more or less than a middling operatic singer passes my comprehension. It is one of those paradoxes which are as startling as they are inexplicable. Well then, I accepted Maréchal’s offer. When he was giving me my lessons he was stern, harsh, almost brutal ; but when the drunken fit was not upon him, the things he taught me were an absolute revelation.

“ Unfortunately these priceless lessons had to come to an end. His drunkenness gained an ever-increasing hold on him and he at length relapsed into a sort of torpor that was not far short of idiocy.

“ Time after time he had urged me to go to Paris and try to get taken on at some little theatre, no matter how small the pay, for he was certain, he said, that once in a job, no matter where, I should, provided I stuck at my work, finish up as a star.

“ So I left Poitiers in order to get to Paris, still singing for my daily bread as I went my way.”

La Maupin, on her way to Paris, journeyed by short stages.

One night, when she was putting up at the New Crown at Villeperdue, not far from Tours, she—dressed of course as a man—found herself in the company of some youthful lords of very merry disposition. She had just finished her song when one of them, guessing the secret which her clothes concealed, said :

“ Come now, my bonny bird, I’ve heard you a-chirping, but what is your plumage like ? ”

That was enough to put la Maupin in a towering passion. Crimson with fury, she answered :

“ My chirruping and my plumage are all of a piece, you insolent coxcomb.” So saying she unsheathed her weapon, put herself in a fighting posture and pressed her adversary with such swift and lively thrusts that the latter, unable to parry them quickly enough, was wounded in the chest and collapsed in a pool of blood. Disdainfully, our heroine turned her back on him and went up to her room in the inn, while the friends of the wounded man carried their burden into a house hard by.

The man whom la Maupin had just wounded was fated to play no inconsiderable part in her career. Had she, shut up there in her room, some obscure presentiment of what the future had in store ? Whether that was so or not, certain it is that she could not sleep and that a sort of remorse tortured her all night long. She was continually conjuring up her adversary’s visage, his soft blue eyes, his youth, his noble bearing. Although she had decided to quit the inn next morning, she knew perfectly well that she would be unable to go. For the first time in her life she was feeling anxious about the fate of an adversary. She even went to inquire of the

barber of the village whether his wounds were grave or not.

That man of skill answered her with words of comfort. Then she went about trying to find out the name of the young man she had so grievously mishandled. It was Louis Joseph d'Albert, of Luynes, son of the Duc de Luynes and of Anne de Rohan-Monbazon.

When the day was drawing to a close, la Maupin was visited by a young man who had come on d'Albert's behalf to seek her out and beg his generous adversary graciously to pardon him for the insulting words which, in a moment of intoxication, he had so thoughtlessly let slip.

"I will go and deliver my reply in person," said la Maupin to the messenger.

An idea had just come to life in the adventuress's fertile brain. At night, shortly before curfew, a mysterious visitant was ushered into the presence of the interesting sufferer. The visitant in question was enveloped in a long and voluminous cloak which concealed the entire figure.

"Monsieur——" began the Comte d'Albert, and stopped short. "What means this masquerade?" he went on.

"Masquerade you think it?"

"Oh, no, madame, you are right. It is no masquerade; you are beautiful!"

"Think you now, monsieur, that my song and my feathers might accord?"

"Will you ever forgive me?"

"Perhaps."

It was the beginning of a great passion.

Anyone who, up to then, had only known la Maupin in

the guise of a strapping cavalier would certainly not have recognised her in the silent, gentle-handed woman who watched, with such tender solicitude, over young d'Albert's progress back to health and strength.

As soon as he was well again the young man was commanded to quit Villeperdue and proceed to Paris, where orders from the King awaited him enjoining him to report at his camp in Germany.

Weeping, the two lovers took their leave of one another, swearing eternal fidelity and vowing they would meet again, in Paris or in Germany, with the briefest possible delay.

Howbeit la Maupin could not proceed immediately to Paris. She was compelled to make a *détour* by way of Rouen, where she encountered yet another who was likewise to exert an important influence on her career.

Gabriel Vincent Thévenard, ex-scullion in his father's cookshop at Orleans, endowed with a soaring voice and a still more soaring ambition, had decided he would make all Paris fall at his feet. Meanwhile, until he was able to appear at the Opera, he was tuning up about the country.

It was now the year 1691. Maupin was twenty-one, and Gabriel Vincent Thévenard, just four years her senior, showed unmistakable symptoms of a violent passion for his new acquaintance.

Shoulder to shoulder the two singers set their faces towards Paris, determined to take the shortest route to the metropolis. Nevertheless, when they arrived at the gates of the capital, la Maupin's apprehensions took possession of her anew. She was still a fugitive from justice. After the fire at Avignon, the Parliament of Aix had issued an edict of condemnation against her, and

that edict was still enforceable in any part of France, in Paris especially.

There was only one man who could ensure her safety, and that man was d'Armagnac. But was he not still away on his estates ? She would see. With great pluck la Maupin, disguising herself and taking every care to avoid the myrmidons of the lieutenant of police, made her way to Le Marais, her late protector's abode. Luckily for her he was at home, having returned but the night before. He did not conceal his joy at beholding once again the woman for whom, in days gone by, he had burned with so ardent a passion.

He took in hand the Avignon business, and three days later the Roi Soleil, amused, though he would not confess it, at our heroine's boldness and temerity, issued an order annulling the verdict of the Parliament of Aix.

Free now from all anxiety, Mademoiselle de Maupin devoted all her thoughts to the Opera.

“ When,” writes Monsieur G. Letainturier-Fradin, “ Lulli by dint of intrigues, no less than by the favour of the King, had supplanted Cambert and Perrin the directors of the Opéra Français, he obtained new Letters Patent conferring upon him the control and privileges of the Royal Academy of Music. Once in possession of this exclusive prerogative, he did not let the grass grow under his feet. The first thing he did was to have a hall built in the Rue de Vaugirard and made an arrangement with the poet Quinault whereby the latter was to write the libretto of his operas.

“ On the 15th November 1672, Lulli formally opened his theatre. The performance there given so delighted the King that His Majesty that year was pleased to enact that the Profession of Singer at the Royal Academy of

Music should be duly 'recognised' and any lady or gentleman could sing at the said Opera without derogating from their title of nobility or forfeiting their privileges, rights and immunities."

In 1673, when Molière died, Lulli was clever enough to get the King to offer him the hall at the Palais Royal, which the author of "*L'Avare*" had occupied until then. The musician established his theatre in the very heart of Paris, two paces from the Louvre, in the most favourable situation possible, all of which was highly pleasing to the Duc d'Orléans, who could go along on the level from his apartments into the hall itself, which was one of the most beautiful of its day.

Lulli then had three houses built in which rehearsals of his performances were held.

At his death, the Opera underwent a terrible crisis. Then his sons, Louis and Jean-Louis de Lulli, inherited his appointment and began their management in 1686.

Their term of office did not last long. On the death of one of the sons, the privilege passed into the hands of Jean Nicolas Francin, the King's *maître d'hôtel*, who had married Lulli's daughter. He took over the duties in 1688.

This ex-*maître d'hôtel* was a past-master in the art of intrigue. It would be impossible to record the adventures in which he was involved, or the countless songs, lampoons and pamphlets which went the round about him.

It was at this time that it became the thing for a man of fashion to choose his paid mistress from among the dancers and singers at the Opera.

The Opera already boasted a great number of pretty women, and Maupin, the loveliest of them all, was destined to make herself an incredible number of enemies.

She had not had an opportunity immediately of displaying her talents as an actress, singer and dancer. Nevertheless she had some powerful friends. There was the Comte d'Armagnac, for example, and, in another category, her comrade Thévenard, who had obtained an engagement at the Royal Academy of Music the very day after his arrival in Paris.

Jean Nicolas Francin, in order to conciliate the other artists, gave the cold shoulder to our heroine. That unfriendly attitude had to be got over somehow. And the Maupin got over it. She went and unearthed a certain Bouvard, who had been a famous singer in his day but who had been compelled by age and infirmity to retire from the boards.

Bouvard, who was very thick with Francin, intervened with great tact and persuaded him to grant Mademoiselle Maupin an audition.

It was an easy victory for her. The Master of the King's Music though at first inclined to treat her with coldness, ended by being carried away by la Maupin's impetuosity, and had to confess that, over and above her purely physical attributes, she possessed unquestionable artistic gifts. Her voice, with its warm, rich tones, and excellent control, brought our heroine an engagement worth three thousand pounds a year.

The rehearsals began in the house that belonged to Francin at the Buttes Saint Roch, which was then the busy and fashionable part of Paris

La Maupin had been given the rôle of Pallas, which she played alongside of the actor Ardouin, who took the part of Cadmus. Hermione was played by a Mademoiselle Rochois, a lively little person who, on the very first day, won a place in the all-accommodating heart of la Maupin.

This predilection for Mademoiselle Rochois, which she was unable to conceal, completely embroiled her with those who, until now, had only borne her a mild grudge for her belated but brilliant conquest of Francin. One of these enemies, the actor Duméni, a sort of vainglorious peacock who was always strutting about and showing off before the women, had from the very outset taken an ineradicable dislike to her. This personage, who had formerly been cook to M. Foucault and had achieved his position as a singer owing to rather a fine natural voice, betrayed, beneath all the present magnificence of his outward equipment, the unmistakable fruits of his training in the servants' hall. It was given out that he had at one time been Mademoiselle Rochois' lover.

It is said that Duméni, whose love-affairs defy enumeration, not only rifled the purses of his conquests but robbed them of their pearls, ribbons and all manner of such belongings, of everything, in a word, which came to his hand. Of these interesting kleptomaniacal activities he was very vain, and had a carpet made out of all the bits of wool and silk he had filched from the alcoves of his amorous adventures.

One rehearsal night Duméni went up to Mademoiselle Maupin and spoke to her in language of so filthy a character that she, stung to fury by the insult, was for wreaking vengeance on the gentleman then and there. However, the others intervened, and at length our heroine consented to remain quiet, only murmuring under her breath :

“ He shall pay for that.”

Pay for it he did, in very truth, and very promptly—that same night in fact—and for many a following day. As soon as she got home, Mademoiselle Maupin flung off

her dress and petticoats and put on man's clothes. About ten o'clock she went, her sword hanging at her hip, and took her stand at the corner of the Rue d'Aubusson and the Rue de la Feuillade, in the Place des Victoires. Even then Paris by night was one of the darkest places you could possibly imagine. Seeing how dark it was, no one could possibly recognise the indignant cantatrice in this well-accoutred, dashing cavalier.

Very soon Duméni came on the scene. He was walking heavily, replete with over-much food and liquor. Suddenly a dark form loomed up in front of him and to his utter amazement he received one of the most formidable smashes in the jaw that could possibly have been dealt him.

La Maupin then drew her sword from its scabbard and called on the hapless wretch to stand to. The other was as big a coward as he was a braggart. In piteous tones he implored his adversary to spare him, saying that he was no swordsman, only a poor and honest citizen, and that he was quite at a loss to know how he had managed to offend the "noble lord." The "noble lord" made answer :

" Since you insult women and have not the courage to defend yourself against men, I am going to give myself the satisfaction of castigating a ruffian and humiliating a poltroon."

And returning her sword to its sheath Mademoiselle Maupin, according to the ballads of the day, brought it down more than a hundred times on the unfortunate creature's back.

Her wrath somewhat appeased, the singer was about to let the poor devil go, when Satan put a knavish idea into her head. She again went up to Duméni, who was

already beginning to offer his back in expectation of a further ration of correctives ; but she was content merely to abstract his watch and the chain attached to it. Then she left him.

Next day, when Mademoiselle came in to rehearsal, she saw the miserable Duméni limping woefully but cackling away loudly to a bevy of fair ones.

“ Last night, let me tell you [thus he was holding forth] I ran into a pretty nice snare. As I was crossing the Place des Victoires, three robbers flung themselves upon me.”

“ Three robbers ! ” they all cried.

“ Three—there were at least three of them. Realising that I was in a tight corner, I determined to make a fight for it and went for them like a lion (the beggars won’t have forgotten yet the weight of my arm), and in spite of the odds against me, I made them take to their heels.”

“ Bravo,” shouted his listeners.

“ Only,” he added, “ in the heat of the struggle the brigands managed to snatch my watch and chain.”

Mademoiselle de Maupin was waiting for that announcement. Swiftly she broke through the group of dainty listeners, and holding out the articles to their owner she exclaimed :

“ You liar ! You’re nothing but a coward and a craven.”

And she recounted what had really passed.

The story brought the house down. La Maupin’s colleagues, even those who were most loth to forgive her rapid success, became, from that day forth, a great deal more careful in the criticisms which they passed, according to their wont, on their envied rival.

“ Cadmus and Hermione,” by Quinault and Lulli was

a great success for Mademoiselle de Maupin. Her renown as a ruffler and her adventures in the lists of Love, gave her the *entrée* in numerous directions. Fashionable society at the end of the seventeenth century flung itself into a vortex of unbridled debauchery. Men and women, over and above the other things, drank, smoked and chewed in reckless rivalry.

La Maupin was not the only woman of her day to wear men's dress. A good number of women did as she did. Duels among females became quite common towards the end of Louis XIV's reign.

It is on record that one woman wrote to another as follows : " I invert the order of the times and, contrary to female custom, send to tell you that I am on the pavement sword in hand to do battle with you for the possession of Philemon." This duel took place, and the two amazons fought with such fury, and dealt each other so many sword-thrusts, that neither the one nor the other came out alive from the combat.

No one therefore saw anything strange in the masculine clothes and conduct of our heroine.

Mademoiselle de Maupin had apparently quite forgotten the Comte d'Albert, when the latter gave her a very tragic reminder of his existence. He was attacked in the middle of the night and was left on the pavement for dead. Forthwith la Maupin came again and, at the bedside of the man whom she had never ceased to love, fulfilled yet once again the rôle of sister of charity, for which her virile nature was so little fitted. After he recovered, the Comte d'Albert was so often involved in duels on account of affairs of the heart that the King ordered him to get back to the army with the least possible delay. He rejoined his regiment at the siege

of Namur and covered himself with glory beside the Maréchal de Boufflers and the Comte de Hornes.

La Maupin, when she heard of the brilliant exploits of the Comte grew daily more in love with him than ever. However, since the absent ones always come off second best, she searched about in Paris for consolations that did not take much seeking.

The youth of Monsieur the King's brother had been particularly tumultuous. But after the death of his wife, Henrietta of England, he had a fit of religious enthusiasm which had lasted some little time. Now, however, in 1692, he was beginning to return once more to the sort of existence he liked best.

It is well known that in his young days he, together with his friend the Abbé de Choisy, took a delight in dressing up as a woman, and gossiping in the middle of a bevy of fair ones full of tenderness and indulgence for his foibles.

His marriage had compelled him to abandon a mode of life so little consonant with his high position, but when he was a widower, and even when he had remarried, he returned to his childish amusements.

In his apartments at the Palais Royal, Monsieur was very fond of entertaining, and in 1692 his Court shone with a brilliance that put even the King's into the shade.

For a long time la Maupin had been desirous of taking part in the magnificent festivities that were held in the palace of Philippe d'Orléans.

Masquerades and disguises being there quite the right thing, she appeared in a male costume which straightway won her the admiration of all the women, who took her for a man, and the jealousy of all the men.

All through the dancing, la Maupin played her part to perfection, and once she went so far as to declare an overflowing passion for one of the prettiest women present. Immediately certain gentlemen came up to her and requested that she would come and explain her conduct in some sequestered spot.

“At your service, gentlemen,” replied the actress. “I will wait upon you in a moment in the Rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre.”

Half an hour later, three young men were lying in that street in a pool of their own blood.

La Maupin went back quite calmly to the Palais Royal, sought for Monsieur in the throng and said to him :

“Monseigneur, in the Rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre three gentlemen lie stretched on the pavement, who have need of prompt assistance. Less than an hour ago they were excessively hot in the head, but the night air might perhaps cool them a little over-much. Kindly give orders that they may be taken to their homes.”

This rash announcement, when the King had set his face sternly against duels, might have got la Maupin into terrible hot water. Perhaps the King’s brother divined the true sex of the daring “cavalier”; anyhow his anger was more assumed than real.

“What, another duel?” said he.

“Nay, there are three of them, Monseigneur, but without desiring in anyway to mitigate Your Royal Highness’s wrath by endeavouring to amuse you, I must inform you that the three gentlemen who are stretched out close to this place with the pavement for their pillows have been wounded by a woman.”

“A woman?”

“ Yes, the woman that has the honour to make Your Highness acquainted with the fact.”

“ Who are you then ? ”

“ Mademoiselle de Maupin.”

If Monsieur the King’s brother displayed some measure of indulgence in this affair, the King himself, when he heard of it next day, flew into a violent rage, and Mademoiselle Maupin deemed it prudent to put the leagues that sunder Paris and Brussels between her royal master and herself.

Brussels in 1698, under the reign of the Elector of Bavaria, was a very peaceful city where adventures and pleasures all went attired in very sober guise.

Theatres did not exist. Just a single troop of players under the name of “ Théâtre de la Cour ” or the Court mummers, had the right to perform from time to time before the Elector.

La Maupin succeeded pretty readily in finding a place in the company of comedians, singers and dancers that performed before the Prince.

Maximilian Marie Emmanuel, Elector of Bavaria, a seasoned and experienced gallant, evinced at first sight a lively affection for our heroine, who, it must be confessed, offered a very feeble resistance to His Highness’s advances.

This morganatic liaison was not of long duration. Very soon the adventuress found herself obliged to fight inch by inch in order to keep a hold on the over-fickle heart of Maximilian Marie Emmanuel. To retain possession of what was already slipping through her fingers, she conceived a stratagem whose too realistic execution filled the Prince’s mind at once with horror and compassion,

Playing the *Æneas* of Jean Wolfgang Franck, she stabbed herself in very truth upon the actual stage. The wound was a terrible one, but it was not mortal. For a time Maximilian gave back his affections to la Maupin, whom, however, he finally abandoned, after a few months, for sundry blond and bulky Belgians whose stolid placidity he found a restful change after the actress's all to orgiastic embraces.

A kind-hearted prince, the Elector, before taking his final leave, granted a pension of two thousand livres to our heroine, who then set out for Spain.

Little is known about la Maupin's peregrinations in Spain. It is on record, however, that she passed through some particularly painful experiences in the Iberian peninsula.

At first, seeing that her purse was well lined, she lived if not comfortably (comfort we know has ever been banished from Spanish hostellries) at least unharassed by care.

On the subject of Spanish inns Madame d'Aulnay in her "Narrative of a Journey in Spain" has left us the amusing notes which we quote below :

"When you arrive in these hostellries very tired and worn-out, grilled by the sun's heat, or frozen by the snow, you are not given so much as even a clean plate. You go into the stable and from there you go upstairs. The stable is generally full of mules and muleteers who by night make use of their beasts' saddles as bed, and by day as tables. They take their meals in a spirit of good comradeship with their mules and freely fraternise with them.

"The staircase by which you ascend is very narrow and like a rickety ladder. The mistress of the house receives

you in a draggle-tail dress with rumpled sleeves. She has time to take out her Sunday clothes while you go downstairs, for they are poor and glorious. Then you are ushered into a bedroom with fairly white walls, beds without curtains, cotton counterpanes and towels about as big as pocket-handkerchiefs, and it must be a big and important town if you find more than two or three. Sometimes there are none at all. In all these houses there is but one single table, and if the muleteers get hold of it first, which they can always do if they like, for they are treated with much greater respect than the people who hire them, you have simply got to wait until they have done with it, or drink out of a pitcher. You cannot warm yourself without getting choked, for chimneys are unknown. It is like this in all the houses you come to on the road. They make a hole in the ceiling, and the smoke goes out through that.

“ The fire is in the middle of the kitchen. They put what they want to roast on the cinders on the ground, and when it is done on one side, they turn it over on to the other.

“ When it is a big joint they tie it to the end of a cord, hang it over the fire and twist it round by hand, so that the smoke makes it so black that it is disagreeable even to look at.

“ I don't think there could be any better way of giving you an idea of what sort of people they are than by showing you these kitchens and the sort of people you find in them, for, not to mention this horrible smoke which blinds and suffocates you, there will be a dozen men and as many women, blacker than devils, dirty as pigs, all dressed like beggars. There is always someone who

thrums interminably on an old guitar and sings like an asthmatic cat. The women's hair is always loose and dishevelled ; you would take them for wandering beggars ; they wear necklaces of glass beads as big as walnuts. They twist them five or six times round, and thus do something to hide the ugliest skins the world can show. They are greater thieves than owls and they only show anxiety to serve you in order to filch something from you, were it only a pin. ' You may take what you like if only you take it from a Frenchwoman ' is their motto.

" The first thing the landlady does is to show you her little children, who go about with nothing on their heads even in the depth of winter, and if they're only a day old. They make them touch your clothes and rub their hands, their cheeks, their throats and their eyes with them. You apparently become a relic with power to cure diseases.

" Those ceremonies over, they ask you if you want anything to eat ; and, even if it were midnight, they must needs send to the butcher's, the market, the wine-shop, the baker's, in short everywhere in the town, to collect the elements of a very indifferent repast."

La Maupin found in her journey from San Sebastian to Madrid an experience at once painful and exceedingly original. She travelled in man's clothes in the company of *bandoleros*, or robbers, regularly organised bands who find their prey alike in the Sierras and the lowlands.

Nevertheless, fond of fighting as she was, she was at a loss to understand how it was the Spaniards liked to employ the knife so freely.

When she arrived in Madrid, she put up in a miserable inn, resumed her female attire and made inquiries concerning the theatres with a view to obtaining an engagement.

Alas, the Spanish theatres kept their doors rigidly closed against her, and her status as ex-principal contralto at the Paris Opera merely availed to get her a place in a troop of *gitanas*, but as she knew neither the "cachucha" nor the "bolero" nor the "fandango" nor any of the popular Spanish dances and songs, her services were quickly dispensed with.

Being totally without funds she was obliged to take a post as chambermaid with the Countess Marino. That occupation did not please her a little bit, and henceforth all her thoughts were directed towards one aim, and that was to get back to France as soon as she could collect the wherewithal for the journey.

However, this took several dreary months, and all that time she had to stay on with the Countess, an intolerably exacting individual on whom la Maupin vowed she would one day get her revenge.

At last she found herself in possession of a sum—painfully amassed sou by sou—that would suffice to get her back to Paris. But before she took her leave, our heroine thought of a splendid means of holding up her detestable mistress to ridicule.

The lady was to go to a ball, and of course her hair had to be specially done for the occasion. All sugar and honey, la Maupin adorned her *coiffure* with half a dozen radishes stuck in the net of her chignon behind, so that everyone in the ball-room would see them, except, of course, the unfortunate Countess herself.

Madame de Marino, only looking at herself in front,

found herself so absolutely beautiful that she so far forgot herself as to compliment her maid.

“Señora,” answered la Maupin with her most innocent air, “you won’t really be able to tell how splendid you look till you get there.”

That night, when the Countess returned home, filled with shame and confusion, Mademoiselle Maupin, mounted on her mule, was trotting along on the road to France.

La Maupin was not long in getting back to Paris. There she found the Comte d’Albert, somewhat older indeed, but more manly, more interesting, too, by reason of the pallor which the numerous wounds he had received in duels or in the field, had imparted to his countenance.

Our heroine, who was duly re-engaged at the Opera, played during 1699 the rôle of Minerva in Quinault and Lulli’s “Thésée” and Cidippe in the “Thétys et Pelée” of Fontenelle and Colasse. Then came the following: Quinault and Lulli’s “Proserpine,” before the King at Fontainebleau; de la Motte and Destouches’ “Marthésie,” Queen of the Amazons; Lulli’s “Cérès.” and “Le Triomphe des Arts” by de la Motte and Delabarre.

The Parisian audiences did not stint their admiration, and before long la Maupin shone forth with a new lustre.

Unfortunately her uncertain temper became more difficult to put up with than ever, and Thévenard, although he had backed her up when she first appeared at the Opera, had to bear most of the brunt of the intractable *comédienne*’s pugnacious proclivities.

La Maupin and Thévenard began by quarrelling, and

then descended to insults. The actress called upon her ex-comrade to measure swords with her ; but he, who all his life long had never managed to hold a sword out straight, refused to comply. For three whole weeks la Maupin besieged his box, and only desisted when all Paris took to humming satirical songs about the Amazon Maid and the King of the Cravens.

Thévenard sent la Maupin a piteous appeal :

“ My dear Julie [why he called her Julie no one knows], everyone in this world has his good points and his bad. I am quite ready to admit that you handle a sword a great deal better than I do. And you must agree that I sing better than you do. Well, then, that being so, you must please recognise that if you only ran me through the breast three times, my voice, supposing I did not die, might be very seriously impaired, and I am bound to think of what my voice means to me, not to mention the bliss of gazing into your eyes when we play together and you don’t fire off those ferocious retorts which rob your expression so completely of its sweetness.

“ So let us make peace. I come to you bound hand and foot (in writing however, for an interview with you might be dangerous). Forgive me for a jest for which I am unfeignedly contrite, and be merciful.”

To this la Maupin replied :

“ Since Monsieur Thévenard admits with so good a grace his disinclination for a duel even with a woman, nothing remains for me but to compliment him on his prudence and I agree to forgive him his offence ; but I

desire that since I have promised him my pardon, he should ask me for it in the presence of those who were witnesses of the insult to which it refers. Let him assemble those witnesses together and I will keep my word."

And Thévenard, who was emphatically averse to fighting, publicly apologised to the aggrieved lady in the foyer of the Opera.

Maupin becoming more and more notorious someone published some rhymes about her, which did not mince matters, either for her or for the other ladies of the staffs.

This was the kind of thing that was going the round :

Voulez-vous savoir l'histoire  
Des beautés de l'Opéra ?  
Un seul passage suffira  
Pour vous remplir la mémoire.

• • • • •  
Ce beau lieu fournit des belles  
A tous les gens d'à présent :  
La Florence pour des meubles,  
La Ancais à tout venant,  
La Denis pour des gants,  
La Subligny reste seule,

Marianne veut contrat,  
La Borgnon n'a pas un chat,  
Perrin pour une rente  
Maupin pour un justaucorps, . . .  
etc.

One day la Maupin came to the Opera dressed as a man and found there, in very dubious company, a certain Baron de Servan, a gentleman of Périgord who was in fact a finished ruffler, a shameless swashbuckler

and probably, in his spare time, a quite considerable scoundrel.

The bravo's conversation struck la Maupin as so notably foul that she decided then and there to administer a corrective. As a little something on account she dug her nails into his face. Then, next morning, while the dawn was still grey, she riddled the hose and doublet of the bold, bad baron with such a number of sword thrusts, that the nobleman showed his face no more, either at the Opera or in the streets of Paris.

In 1700, la Maupin was living in some rather nice quarters in the Rue Saint-Honoré. Unfortunately she could not get on at all with her landlord.

One night, it was the 6th September 1700, she got home about nine o'clock and told her landlord she wanted supper. As he did not comply with sufficient alacrity for her liking, she seized a spit which was hanging against the chimney-piece and began to belabour the poor man's face with it. Menservants and maidservants tried to intervene, but in less than no time they were all out of action.

The magistrate was called to the scene of the conflict and drew up the following report :

“At half-past nine of the clock on the night of the 6th September in the year one thousand seven hundred, we, Jean Regnault, proceeded to a house in the Rue Saint-Honoré occupied by the Sieur Langlois, burgess of Paris, where, on having been ushered into the kitchen, we found Marguerite Foret, a servant of the said Langlois. She had been wounded and blood was flowing from her head above the right eye. Her white linen cap trimmed with lace had been torn in pieces ; her dress of a grey

material was stained with blood in several places down the front. She, being in this condition, did lodge with us a complaint against a woman named Maupin, a singer at the Opera, and deposed that the said Maupin had come down from her bedroom into the said kitchen and demanded supper, whereupon the Sieur Langlois, the deponent's employer, told her, the said Maupin, that he was no longer obliged to supply her with food, inasmuch as the arrangements made between them had now terminated. Then the said Maupin, in a state of great violence, and transported with fury, is said to have seized a sheep's pluck which the complainant was taking from the spit and to have belaboured the face of the said Sieur Langlois therewith. Then taking God's name in vain she took the great key of the door and with that key struck a blow at the complainant's head, inflicting upon her a wound above the right eye. Then she rushed upon her and felled her to the stone floor of the said kitchen, kicked her and punched her, tore her cap and put her into the condition in which we now see her, wherefore she has lodged with us the present complaint."

Having drawn up his report, the man of law withdrew in order to lodge his precious rigmarole in the proper quarter. Next day the witnesses were called, servants and shopkeepers of the neighbourhood, who all deposed that they had seen la Maupin, a singer at the Opera, lying on the kitchen floor struggling wildly with a maid-servant. Finally a surgeon certified in writing that he had "visited, and given professional attention to Marguerite Foret, a servant in the establishment of the Sieur Langlois, and that she had a wound on the

forehead as well as several contusions and abrasions on the forearm."

Things came to such a pass that, yet once again, la Maupin was compelled to have recourse to her protector-in-ordinary, owing to whose representations the action against her was withdrawn.

From 1700 to 1701 Mademoiselle Maupin played in Lulli's "Carnaval" and de la Motte's "Canente"; in "Hésione," a tragedy by Dauchet with music by Camprat; "Aréthuse," by the same author and composer; also in "Scylla," but that was hissed and was taken off after the first performance.

In 1701, no one knows why, our heroine suddenly remembered that back in the Dark Ages she had married a certain Monsieur Maupin, who had been sent, by the Comte d'Armagnac, heaven knows how long ago, into some distant part of the country, where perhaps the poor man was eating his heart out. Her husband came back to Paris and la Maupin led him a smooth and tranquil life, but it was on one express condition, and that was, that he should keep his eyes shut.

On the 23rd February 1702, la Maupin sang in a performance, given before the King, of de la Motte's "Omphale," music by Destouches. Her interpretation came in for some lively criticisms and one doggerel rhymster produced the following :

La Maupin, dit-on, à Versailles  
Comme ici n'a rien fait qui vaille.  
La chose ne m'étonne pas  
Elle se réglait sur Hercule ;  
Où le mullet ne passe pas,  
Peut-on faire passer la mule ?

Rather cruel—but it caught on.

On the other hand, this is what we read in the *Journal du Marquis de Dangeau*, under date 27th February 1702 : "They held a council all the morning and went for a walk in the afternoon. On returning from his walk he worked with Monsieur Pelletier and at seven o'clock he went up into his Royal Box and listened to the Opera "Omphale," which was very well performed and in which the King, who had not seen anything of the kind for some considerable time, seemed to take considerable pleasure. Madame de Maintenon was also present for a time and heard la Maupin, who has the loveliest voice in the world. Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne, with her ladies, was in the Box with the King, while Monseigneur and the rest of the Court were downstairs."

If the nobles still applauded, the parterre did not, and when she appeared in "Médée," on the 23rd July 1702, she was severely hissed. But la Maupin was not to be upset by a thing like that and before long we come across her again singing in "Polymnie," "Iris" and "Valfrina." Then on the 7th November 1702, she played in "Tancrede" by Dauchet and Camprat. She came on as a warrior, in breastplate and helmet, and scored one of her last, but one of her greatest, triumphs.

During all this time the affairs of the Comte d'Albert were in as bad a way as they could be. The King, sick of his everlasting kicking over the traces, had him arrested and tried on a charge of repeated infractions of the law against duelling. The result was that Mademoiselle Maupin's friend spent two years in prison.

Scarcely had he regained his freedom when he found himself the object of a furious competition between the Duchesse de Luxembourg and la Maupin.

“The Comte d’Albert,” writes a contemporary, “would give anything to get back the regiment he has lost. I don’t know if you were here when that disaster overtook him. It was a little quarrel with a Danish gentleman that brought about his downfall. This squabble, for which the Duchesse de Luxembourg served as a pretext, they dignified by the name of a duel. The Comte d’Albert and the Comte d’Uzès, who was also in trouble, decided that the best course lay in flight, but Monsieur de Barbézian, who, as you know, was the Comte d’Uzès’ brother-in-law, managed to give another turn to the affair and to compel these gentlemen to return to prison. They came out some little while afterwards, but it cost the Comte d’Albert his regiment, for which he had paid to the tune of 40,000 livres and which the King put an end to the very first thing. So at present he’s rather at sea. The Comte d’Uzès got off cheaper and the Dane merely had to leave the country. Apparently he had no intention of remaining here. The Duchesse de Luxembourg did not get off any more lightly than these gentlemen, since she has fallen pretty deeply into the royal disfavour. This affair has involved her in another one none too pleasant. La Maupin, who likes to think she is deeply in love with the Comte d’Albert, has got a bee in her bonnet about it all. One day, when the Duchesse was attending Mass at St. Roch, she went up to her prie-Dieu and said in a threatening tone that if she continued carrying on with the Comte d’Albert, she might count on having her brains blown out with a pistol. Everybody who knows la Maupin are quite convinced that she would do as she said. This conduct of la Maupin set the Court and the town talking again, and all the time in connection with the unfortunate lady.

“ There’s an example of what you have to put up with when you’ve got looks and make up your mind to use them.”

However, as it turned out, our heroine did not carry out her plan and did not blow her rival’s brains out. She was diverted from that sinister intention by worry about her husband’s death and the further misfortunes of Comte d’Albert. The latter, now quite done for in France, decided on the 2nd April 1703, to put his sword at the service of the Elector of Bavaria.

Immediately after his departure, Mademoiselle Maupin sent him a long letter in rhymed couplets. It is generally supposed that the poet Dauchet composed it for her. The Comte d’Albert sent her a reply also in verse.

A little while afterwards, d’Albert came back to Paris. He took his leave of la Maupin because, in the first place, he had fallen violently in love with a certain Madame de Mussy and because he knew, in the second, that the Elector Maximilian intended to assign to him in marriage a Demoiselle de Montigny, Canoness of Mons, who would bring him in an income of forty thousand écus.

Mademoiselle Maupin appeared to forget all about the inconstant swain, and gave herself up wholly to the theatre. She played in “ Ulysse et Pénelope ” by Béchard, music by Rebel ; in “ Persée ” by Quinault and Lulli ; in “ Psyché ” by Corneille de l’Isle, music by Lulli ; in the “ Carnaval et la Folie ” by de la Motte, music by Destouches ; in “ Ysis,” a tragedy by Quinault, music by Lulli, in “ Iphigénie en Thauride,” etc.

Suddenly in 1705, just after she had appeared in “ La Vénitienne,” a comedy of de la Motte’s with music by

Delabarre, in which she sustained the rôle of Isabelle, Mademoiselle Maupin quitted the stage to return to it no more.

A new and unexpected event had occurred. Her life of adventure, her travels, her duels, everything which went to make up the amazingly virile character of this astonishing woman, was in a trice forgotten, cast off for ever, like the masculine attire she had cherished for so long.

To what are we to ascribe this startling development?

According to the "Manuscrit des Frères Parfaict": "Her retirement was occasioned by the death of Madame la Comtesse de Florensac, who honoured Mademoiselle de Maupin with her friendship and her protection. Mademoiselle Maupin, after bitterly grieving for this lady's death, asked to be released from her engagements and retired to some sequestered and distant retreat."

Details are rather scanty concerning the Comtesse de Florensac (Marie-Thérèse Louise de Senneterre de Lestrange, born about the month of May 1671, married to the Marquis de Florensac according to the contract dated 22nd January 1688), who died at the age of 35. She was one of the loveliest women in France. She was a daughter of Saint Nectaire and of a sister of de Longueval, a lieutenant-general killed in Catalonia, and was born out of wedlock. Her mother had been maid to the Queen and very good-looking.

By means of brains, influence and scheming she had "had the law" of her brother-in-law, who was put into prison and only got out of it after a considerable time

and with a great deal of trouble, and never married. Thus Madame de Florensac was very rich. She had many admirers and was accused of not being invariably cruel. However, she was the best woman in the world, the gentlest and the most unaffected, for all her beauty.

“She was exiled by Monseigneur, whose attentions were beginning to be talked about. Her husband, a brother of the Duc d’Uzès, a companion to Monseigneur and the kindest man in France, never noticed anything, he loved her passionately. She died within two days and left one daughter, good-looking also, but not as good-looking as her mother. She prided herself on her knowledge and brains. She is now the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, God knows how, and Madame la Princesse de Conti also.”

Saint-Simon only just touches on Madame de Florensac’s affairs of the heart. Nevertheless, the somewhat malicious allusion to the beauty and easy virtue of the fair Marquise makes one suspect a variety of things.

Nevertheless, it seems certain that Madame de Maintenon had ordered Madame de Florensac’s exile because she had displayed over-much affection towards the son of Louis XIV. Sent away to do penance at the Abbey of Notre-Dame de Soissons, a ballad of the times celebrates her in these terms :

La Florensac arrive  
Plus belle que le jour  
Disant : quoi ! l'on me prive  
Des plaisirs de la Cour,  
Pour avoir, sous mes lois,  
Mis les Princes de France

Je séjourne à Soissons,  
Don, don  
Fallait-il pour cela,  
La la  
Si rude pénitence ?

Madame de Florensac reappeared at Court in April 1701, and lived, it appears, rather a gay life in the capital. It was apparently about this time that she heard la Maupin at the Opera, and an intimacy sprung up between the two women on which neither letters nor memoirs throw any light.

When Madame de Florensac died, she left behind her a husband so stricken with grief that he entered the Jesuit novitiate, and a friend, la Maupin, so inconsolable that she became a convert to religion, and turning, at this late hour, her thoughts upon the salvation of her soul, set her feet in the path of order and righteousness.

Everything in la Maupin's character seems to have been exaggerated. As soon as she had given up the breeches for the petticoat, and exchanged the secular for the religious life, she gave herself up to the most extravagant religious exercises. She gazes at the angels, she hears voices, she holds converse with God and the Blessed Virgin, she becomes possessed of a mystical love of Jesus, and, after some years spent in the solitude of a sequestered house, she questions sincerely whether, as many illustrious actors and actresses had done before her, she should not take the final and irrevocable vows.

In the uncertainty and distress which visited her in her lonely life, her thoughts turned for the last time to the Comte d'Albert, and she wrote to

discuss with him her religious vocation. This was his reply :

“ Think for a moment who it is you are addressing. Is it my religion, my heart, my willingness that you would put to the proof ? And do you expect, in thus consulting me, that I shall have sufficient mastery over my own feelings to strengthen and support your own ? Have you ceased to remember what I am to you ? Is it not an insult to my misfortune to force me to acquiesce in it, and do you not deserve that, to punish you for your injustice, I should take sides with the world against you. I know you do not doubt the sincerity of my solicitude for your happiness, but do you not know that you cannot achieve the happiness to which you aspire, without shattering my own, without destroying my peace of mind ?

“ Is it wise of you to trust the counsel of a man who cannot act in good faith save to the detriment of his own interests. You must know that inasmuch as you are renouncing the world, my interests are very different from yours. How difficult you make it for me to act in a manner consistent with the good opinion you entertain of me, and what a price I am having to pay for having convinced you, once, of my sincerity. If I am conscientiously to do as you bid, I must cut myself off from myself. I must stifle all the promptings of my own heart. I must, in short, use words that are totally at variance with the promptings of my heart, and to serve you I must sacrifice myself. Never did reason exercise such a tyranny over nature. Set therefore upon this sacrifice the value which it merits. It is the greatest I have ever made, or ever could make, in all my life.”

This letter, a monument of selfishness and hypocrisy, was perhaps anything but the sort of answer *la Maupin* desired to receive.

Sick at heart, having tasted of everything and despaired of everything, almost insane with her mystical hallucinations, our heroine, now sad and lonely, died we know not where : probably in some suburb of Paris. Her body was cast upon the rubbish heap.

# INDEX

**Abrantes**, 65  
**Adolphus**, John, brother of Charles Gustavus, 119  
    unpopular, 120  
**Ajaccio**, 88  
**Alberoni**, Cardinal Pauluccio-Paulucci, coadjutor of Clement X, turns Rome into City of Pleasure, 129  
**Alexander VII**, Pope, and Louis XIV, 121 seq.  
**Amazon** duels, quite common under Louis XIV, 193  
**Anderlecht**, 82  
**Anne of Austria**, 105  
**Augureau**, Gen., 30, 54, 56  
    Madame, 54  
**Austerlitz**, Battle of, 56  
**Avignon**, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 121, 171, 173, 181, 187  
**Azzolini**, Cardinal, in charge of Christina's finances, 116; a letter to, 132, 133; inherits Christina's property, 134  
— Pompei, his nephew, 134  
**Bancal**, Minister of War, 84  
**Barraza**, Antonio, *corregidor*, 164  
**Barrown**, Col. of the Royal Irish, 94  
**Bart**, Jean, a kind gaoler, 11  
**Bayonne**, 59  
**Beauharnais**, Mademoiselle de, 52  
**Berlin**, 58  
**Bernadotte**, Maréchal, his proposals to Thérèse, 57, 58  
— Madame, 57  
**Berne**, 38  
**Bernino**, his statue of Truth, 102  
**Bessières**, Marshal, 58  
**Bilbao**, 150  
**Bolderwold**, 68, 72  
**Bonaparte**, Jérôme, praises the "widow Bralon," 90  
**Boucaud**, 85  
**Bonhomme**, Honoré, publishes the "Letters" of Théophile de Fernig, 87  
**Bourgogne**, Duchesse de, 207  
**Bourget**, M. Paul, 145  
**Bouvard**, a retired singer, 189  
**Boyer**, the famous doctor, 59  
**Bralon**, Angélique Marie-Joséphe, sub-lieutenant of the Invalides, 87 seq.; daughter, sister, and widow of brave soldiers, 87, 88; joined the army at twenty-one, 88; fought with the courage of a heroine, 88, 89; appointed sub-lieutenant, 89, 90; praised by Jérôme Bonaparte and others, 89, 90; presented to the Queen Mother of Spain, 90, 91; died of low fever, 91  
**Brussels**, one of the dullest cities on the Continent, 99  
**Burgos**, 59, 60, 64, 65, 75, 76, 149  
**Busca**, 38  
— Count Belinodi, helps Thérèse escape from Spaniards, 38 seq.  
**Cadiz**, 151, 168  
**Calvi**, the siege of, 88, 89  
**Calvin**, 98  
**Camprat**, playwright, 207  
**Camus**, Minister of War, 84  
**Caquéré**, M. de, tells an old story of Thérèse, 70 seq.  
**Carolina**, prima donna, befriends Thérèse, 67 seq.  
**Carteaux**, Gen., to deal with Federal of Avignon, 8; offers Thérèse a chance to serve the Republic, 12 seq.  
**Castille**, 149  
**Castres**, 21, 22, 23, 25  
**Catherine of Russia**, 135  
**Châlon-sur-Saône**, 51

Chantilly, 105  
 Chanut wants Christina to remain Queen, 98  
 Chapelain, author of play on Joan of Arc, 105  
 Charles, Archduke, gives Thérèse "a few pieces of silver," 44  
 Charles X, 94  
 — XI, 130  
 — XII, 130  
 Charles Gustavus, King of Sweden, 95, 100, 117, 118; his death, 119  
 Christina, Queen of Sweden, her abdication, 95; adopts male attire and name of Count Dohna, 95, 96; receives homage from College of Jesuits, 96; resumes garb of woman, 96; meets the Prince de Condé, 96, 97; everywhere received in royal state, 97; turns Catholic, 97; attracted by ceremonial, 98; would rather be Sage than Saint, 98, 99; letters to Charles Gustavus and the Pope, 100; brilliant entry into the Papal States, 100, 101; as an Amazon, 101; takes name of Alexandra, 101; seeing the sights, 101, 102; laughs aloud during Mass, 102; her "ignorant impertinence," 102; grand entry into Paris, 103, 104; welcome from the Académie Française, 104; "'Tis a man of merit," 105; very popular with the men, 106; executes her chief equerry, 107 seq.; "her detestable arrogance" makes her unpopular, 114, 115; to take possession of Pomerania, 116; annuity from the Pope, 116; full of plans, 118; hopes for power in the Regency, 120; at last allowed to practise her own religion, 120, 121; tries to mediate between

Christina (*contd.*)

Louis XIV and the Pope, 121 seq.; celebrates appointment of new Pope, 125; her palace besieged, 126; failure as military tactician, 126; offers herself as Queen of Poland, 127 seq.; supported by the Pope, 128; anxious to be Queen again, 130; her death announced (!), 130, 131; turns to religion, 131; goes to church with pistol and sword, annoys the Pope, 132; delight at having her pension suspended, 132, 133; an attack of erysipelas, 133; her death, 134; her character, 134, 135; play-acting all her life, 135  
 Chili, 156, 157  
 Civita Vecchia, 103  
 Clairfayt, the Austrian General, 86  
 Clement IX, Pope, 124, 125, 129; his death, 129  
 — X (Cardinal Emilio Altieri), 129; his death, 129  
 Collioure, 25  
 Colonna, Cardinal, his "attentions" to Christina, 102  
 Compiègne, and the Court, 54, 55, 105, 106  
 Condé, Duc de, 128  
 Condé, Prince de, 96, 97  
 Conflans, 103  
 Conti, Cardinal, under dominion of Christina, 129  
 — Princesse de, 211  
 Cordillera de Quito, 152  
 Corsica, 87, 88  
 Créqui, Duc de, French Ambassador in Rome, 121  
 — Duchesse de, 121  
 Cuzco, 165  
 Cochabamba, 163  
 d'Agramont, Comte, Viceroy of Pau, flirts with Catalina, 168, 169  
 d'Aiguillon, Duchesse, 211

d'Albert, Comte, fights, and loves, Mlle. Maupin, 184-186; wounded and nursed by Mlle. Maupin, 193, 194; more manly and interesting, 201; object of rivalry between Mlle. Maupin and Duchesse de Luxembourg, 207-209; in love with Madame de Mussy; to marry Mlle. de Montigny, 209; selfish letter to Mlle. Maupin, 213

d'Alibert, Sieur, 122

Dangeau, Marquis de, his "Journal" quoted, 207

Dantzig, Duchesse de, to be labelled "Sans-Gêne," 1; her vulgarity set the wits laughing, 2; will keep jam in the library, 3; "I don't care a ——", 3, 4

— Duc de, "I am all my ancestors," 1, 2

d'Armagnac, Comte, 174, 181, 189, 206; in love with Mlle. Maupin at 14, 175; finds her the "accommodating" M. Maupin, 175; again helps Mlle. Maupin, 187

Davin, Gen., 38, 41

Davison, sent to Sweden by Christina, 117, 118

d'Aubigny, M., father of Mlle. Maupin, a dashing fellow, 174

d'Aulnay, Madame, her "Narrative of a journey in Spain," 197-99

d'Aurevilly, Barbey, quoted, 140, 145

Dauchet, poet, 207, 209

de Barbézian, M., brother-in-law of Comte d'Uzès, 208

de Beurnonville, Minister of War, discovers the sisters de Fernig, 79-81; summons Dumouriez, 84, 85

de Beauxhotes, M. Cartellous, 144

de Boufflers, Maréchal, 194

de Cardennas, Dona Beatrix, to marry Catalina, 154

de Chartres, Duc, 81, 82, 83

de Chaves, Dona Caterina, 161, 162

de Choisy, Abbé, used to dress up as a woman, 194

de Erano, Catalina, defies her aunt, the Prioress, 146 seq.; makes herself a man's riding suit out of nun's habit, 148; valet to a Professor, 149; learns to fight from company of brigands, 149; a rogue and cutpurse, 149; takes name of Francisco Loyola, 149; two years a page, 150; cabin-boy to an uncle, 151; deserts under Captain Eguino, quarrels with him, again goes to sea, 151; works for a merchant, 151, 152; duels and prisons, 152 seq.; joins army, captained by her brother (!) Miguel, 156; subject to attacks from Indians, 157; has great affection for her brother, 156 seq.; a gallant fight, promoted ensign, 157, 158; more duels, kills her brother in the darkness, 158; terrible tramp across the Andes, 159, 160; again pretends to accept offer of house-steward to a City Syndic, 161; puts Alonzo Ibbanès to flight, 161; train-bearer to Dona Catarina de Chaves, 161; ordered to disfigure a rival, 162; "The wooden wedges between her toes," 162; more duels, imprisonments and miraculous escapes, 162 seq.; a shepherdess, 162; duel in Church, 163 seq.; spits out "the Host"—the consequences, 164 seq.; "saint or demon?" 165; enters a convent, 166, 167; after release, defies a Captain and three officers on board ship, 168; once more a "man," 168;

de Eranso (*contd.*)  
 her mysterious death, 169; her character, 169; her appearance described, 170

de Eranso, Michael (Miguel), father of Catalina, 146, 150  
 — brother of Catalina, 156 seq.

de Eschazarata, Miguel, 151, 169

de Fernig, Félicité, born in 1773, 78; secretly joined army, 79; confesses and is forgiven, 78-81; her courage becomes legendary, 82; fights with "bridle between her teeth," 82; defeats a "band of Uhlans," 83, 84; gives her horse to Dumouriez, 85; outlawed, 86; marries Vanderwallen and resumes feminine character, 87

de Fernig, Louis Joseph, father of Félicité and Théophile, a friend of Voltaire, 78, 79

de Fernig, Théophile, born 1776, 78; secretly joined the army, 79; confessed and is forgiven, 78, 81; courage becomes legendary, 82; saves Gen. Ferrand, 82; secures the victory at Jemmapes, 82, 83; nearly loses her life, 85; outlawed, 85; a model wife and mother, 87; her "Letters" published by Bonhomme, 87

de Fernig, the younger, brother of Félicité and Théophile, 81

de Galarraga, Maria Perez, mother of Catalina, 146

de Hornes, Comte, 194

de Ibarra, Captain Juan, terribly close-fisted, 151

de Idiaquez, Don Juan, Secretary of State, 150

Delabarre, musician, 210

de la Motte, his "Omphale," 206; his "La Vénitienne," 209

de la Reynie, M., lieutenant of the police, 176

de Lavalle, Pedro, describes Catalina's appearance, 170

de Liancourt, André Vernesson, *maître d'armes*, 174

de Ligne, Prince Charles Joseph, his kindness to Thérèse, 44 seq.

de Linde, Baron, 95

de Longueval, Lieutenant-General, uncle of Comtesse de Florensac, 210

de Lulli, of the Opéra Français, 187 seq., 206

—, Louis, son of the above, 188

—, Jean-Louis, ditto, 188

de Lyonne, M., Louis XIV's ambassador in Rome, 103

de Mailly, Chevalier, his book suppressed, 173

de Maintenon, Madame, 207, 211

de Marbot, General, his "Memoirs," 1

de Montifaud, Madame Marc, dressed like a dandy, 143

de Montigny, Mlle., to marry Comte d'Albert, 209

de Montpensier, Duc, 82, 83

de Mussy, Madame, loved by Comte d'Albert, 209

Denon, M., a loyal friend, 51

d'Eon, Chevalier-Chevalière, 4

de Saint-Michel, General Lecourbe, praises the "widow Bralon," 89, 90

Descartes, discusses philosophy with Christina, 98

de Servan, Baron, a swashbuckler, punished by Mlle. Maupin, 203, 204

d'Espinoy, General, proposes for Sutter, 76

Destouches, the musician, 206

de Toff, Count, 97

de Urquiza, Don Juan, merchant, 152; always getting Catalina out of scrapes, 154, 155

de Valderrama, Dom Fray Domingo, Lord Bishop, 164

Deventer, 96  
 Diane, Countess, 144  
 di Ceralta, Francisco, Prof. of Literature, 149  
 Diego, Father Fray, quoted, 169  
 Dieulafoy, Madame, always dressed as a man, 141; educated *all* children as girls, the only way to secure good manners, 141, 142; her appearance described, 142; very learned, 143, 144; her *Parysatis*, a sound book, 144  
 Dijon, 4, 176  
 d'ILLIERS, General Baraguay, 56  
 Dohna, Count, name taken by Christina, Queen of Sweden, 95, 96  
 Doppet, General, Municipal Counsellor, salutes Thérèse, 14  
 d'Orléans, Duc Philippe, brother of Louis XIV (Monsieur), 105, 188, 194; admits Mlle. Maupin to ball at his palace, 194  
 Douro, the, 64  
 Dubois-Crancé, leads army of the Republic, 8  
 Ducrest, Madame, quoted, 3  
 Dugommier, General, succeeds Carteaux, admires Thérèse, 16, 17  
 Duméni, formerly cook, a vain-glorious amorist, befooled by Mlle. Maupin, 190-192  
 Dumouriez, General, formerly Minister of War, proceeds to Valenciennes, 81; exploits the de Fernigs, 81; enters Mons, 83; his personal ambitions, 84; flight and surrender to the Austrians, 84-86  
 Dunoyer, Madame, 174, 181; her "Letters" quoted, 171-173  
 Dupas, General, 56  
 Durance, the, 14  
 d'Uzès, Comte, duel with Comte d'Albert, 208  
 Duchesme, General, and his "poor horses," 49, 50  
 Ebro, the, 148  
 Eguino, Captain of "undesirables," 151  
 Embrun, 50  
 Emmanuel, Maximilian Marie, Elector of Bavaria, a seasoned gallant, 196, 209  
 Empress, The, always at home to the Duchesse de Dantzig, 2; good manners expected in her presence, 3  
 Epinal, 4  
 Estella, 150  
 Eylau, the battle of, 94  
 Ferney, 78  
 Ferrand, General, 82, 83  
 Figueur, Pierre, corn-chandler, father of Thérèse, 4, 55; his second wife, 4  
 Figueur, Thérèse (Sans-Gêne), her parents, 4; "very devil of a child," 4, 5; "passion for dragooning it," 5; "a half-penny for a crown," 5, 6; her uncle Joseph, 6 seq.; meets Clément Sutter, 6; at a cloth-merchants, 6, 7; strong royalist, 7 seq.; joins royalist army in man's attire, 7 seq.; her "uniform," 8; fires a gun, 9 seq.; a prisoner, 10 seq.; offered service with the Republic, 12 seq.; given the name of Sans-Gêne, 14; popular in Marseilles, 14, 15; first real fighting, 15; and the feather, 16; punished by Napoleon, whom she calls "a regular nigger," 19 seq.; saves Toulon, 21; joins the *Insurrection*, 21, 22 describes her own appearance, 22; and "a gardener's daughter," 22 seq.; not afraid of the spy, 25 seq.; her curious mentality, 26 seq.; though a woman, allowed to remain in

Figueur (*contd.*)

the army, 28; refuses share of loot, 28, 29; saves French émigrés, 29; saves General and two soldiers, 30; dance given by Spanish ladies, 30, 31; nearly marries an Adjutant-General, 31 seq.; thoughts on marriage, 32; a jest at the altar, 33, 34; again insists on a dance, 34 seq.; an apology for a horse, 36, 37; escapes from Spaniards, 38 seq.; wounded and captured, 42 seq.; befriended by Prince de Ligne, 44 seq.; "saved by a miracle," 48, 49; a celebrated figure in Paris, 51 seq.; friendship with Joséphine, 51 seq.; comment on J's dress, 52; talks with Napoleon, 52-54; dislikes having her hair cut, 54; a game of "John Oats," 55; refuses to dine with Maréchal Augereau, 56; Bernadotte wants a mistress, 57, 58; recovers health in an infirmary, 59; helps beggars and hospital patients, 60, 61; in the hands of the famous Merino, 61 seq.; the barbarous Scotsman, 64, 65; prisoner at Lisbon, 65, 66; manages to look decent, 66; befriended by Carolina, *prima donna*, 67 seq.; a prisoner in England, 68-70; hears an old story of her own life, 70 seq.; still prefers the uniform of a soldier, 74; last talk with Napoleon, 74, 75; "merely an ambulance man," 75; starts eating-house, 75; a present refused, 75, 76; meets again and marries Clément Sutter, 76, 77; happiness in marriage,

Figueur (*contd.*)

77; after his death, she dies in almhouse, the "Petits Ménages," 77  
 Florensac, Comtesse de, friend and protector of Mlle. Maupin, 210-212; Marquis de, 210, 211, 212  
 Fluvia, the, 30  
 Fontainebleau, 103  
 Foret, Marguerite, servant assaulted by Mlle. Maupin, 204-206  
 Francin, Jean Nicolas, *ex-maître d'hôtel*, director of Opera, 188 seq.  
 Friedland, 94  
 Garnerin, Madame, starts eating-house with Thérèse, 75  
 Gaultier, Pierre, opens Academy of Music, 177  
 Genoa, 169  
 Gerard, Colonel, quoted, 90, 91  
 Girondists outlawed, 7  
 Gironna, 29  
 Goldsmith, Lewis, quoted, 2  
 Gossuin, representative of the people, draws up decree against the de Fernigs, 86  
 Gouvier-Saint-Cyr, 55  
 Grandjean, Anne, "feminine hermaphrodite," born at Grenoble, 136; advised by Confessor to discard her petticoats and marry some honest girl, 136, 137; takes name of Jean Baptiste, 137; proposes to, and marries Françoise Lambert, 137, 138; the midwives declare she is a boy, 138; curé declares she is not a man, 139; exposed and imprisoned, 139; ordered to resume name of Anne, 139  
 Great National Razor—the Guillotine, 11, 13  
 Grenoble, 8, 136, 137  
 Gronovius, Professor, arguing all night with Queen of Sweden, 96

Guamanga, 166, 167  
Guemez, Father, 97  
Guise, Duc de, to escort Christina in France, 103  
Gustavus Adolphus, father of Christina, Queen of Sweden, 99, 105, 115, 124, 133  
Gyldener, a woman who passed herself off as Christina, 118  
Hamburg, 95, 121, 124, 125, 128  
Henrietta of England, wife of Monsieur, 194  
Henry IV, 103  
Ibbanès, Alonzo, terrorises La Plata, 161  
Innocent XI (Benedetto Odescalchi) 129, 132  
Inns, in Spain, 197-199  
Innsbruck, 99  
Issy, 75  
Jemmapes, 81  
Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania, to be King of Poland, 129  
Jenks, Amelia Bloomer, reformer of women's clothes, 140, 141; popular in America, 140; satirised by *Punch* and *Charivari*, 141  
Joseph, King, 66  
Josephine, Empress, 3; makes friends with Thérèse, 51 seq.  
Junot, General, 17, 55  
Kens, an Austrian general, 47, 48  
La Belle Lyonnaise, distinguished spy, defied by Thérèse, 25 seq.; in prison, 37, 38  
Las Charcas, 162  
la Gardie, Count Magnus de, 124, 126  
La Houssaye, 56  
Lamarque, Minister of War, 84  
Lamartine, 78 seq.  
Langlois, landlord of Mlle. Maupin, 204, 205  
Lannes, General, 55  
La Plata, 161, 162, 163, 164  
La Paz, 164, 165  
Lebel, Father, Prior of the Maturins, intercedes for Monaldeschi, 107 seq.  
Le Cid, 165  
Lefebvre, Maréchal, 55; *See* "Duc de Dantzig."  
Lefèvre-Desnouettes, General, 74  
Legrand, Jacqueline, to marry Jean-Baptiste (or Anne) Grandjean, 137; betrays Jean-Baptiste, 138  
Le Hénaut, 78  
Leopold, Archduke, 96, 97  
Letainturier-Fradin, Monsieur G. quoted, 187, 188  
Lima, 155, 156  
Lima, Archbishop of, 167  
Lisbon, 65  
Loire, the, 181  
London, 70  
Lons-le-Saunier, the hospital of, 50  
Lorraine, Prince de, 128  
Louis XIV, 105, 107, 193; quarrel with the Pope, 121 seq.; his son, 211,  
Loti, Perrie, 144  
Luther, 98  
Luxembourg, Duchesse de, in love with Comte d'Albert, 207; quarrel with Mlle. Maupin, 208, 209  
Luynes, Duc de, 185  
Lymington, 68, 72  
Lyons, 26  
Madeira, 68  
Madrid, 168, 169, 199, 200  
Malbosquet, Fort, 15  
Mancini, Hortense, niece of Mazarin, 106  
Mantua, Bay of, 152  
"Manuscrit des Frères Parfaict," 210  
Marchand, Mrs., dying to meet Thérèse, 72, 73  
Maréchal, an old comedian, trains Mlle. for Paris Opera, 182, 183  
Marie Louise, Empress, 91

Marseilles, 9, 14, 15, 38, 176, 177, 181  
 Masséna, Sergeant-Major, 17  
 — General, 55  
 Maubourg, General de la Tour, 89  
 Maulde, 81  
 Maupin, Mademoiselle, operatic star; the tale of a nun, 171-173; becomes the protogée of Comte d'Armagnac at 14, 174, 175; marries, and drives away, Monsieur Maupin, 175; fond of street-fights, 176; elopes and gives public displays with a fencing-master, Serannes, 176, 177, 178; goes on the stage as Mlle. d'Aubigny, 177; desires a "faultless blonde," 178; finds a girl and follows her into convent—thence the corpse and the fire, 179-181; trained by an old comedian, Maréchal, 182, 183; fights and loves Comte d'Albert, 184-186; to Paris with ex-scullion, Gabriel Vincent Thévenard, 186, 187; enemies—and friends, at the opera, 188 seq.; her revenge on the vain-glorious Duméni, 190-192; nurses Comte d'Albert 193, 194; duel with three young men, 195, 196; liaison with Elector of Bavaria, 196; stabs herself on the stage, 197; at a Spanish inn, 197-199; plays practical joke on Countess Marino, 200, 201; again with Comte d'Albert, 201; back in Paris, 201; in various "parts," 201; quarrel and reconciliation with Thévenard, 201-203; outspoken rhymes, 203; punishes a swash-buckler, 203, 204; assaults a servant, 204-206; more "parts" taken, 206-207, 209; recalls her husband, 206; his

Maupin (*contd.*)

death, 209; rivalry for Comte d'Albert, with the Duchesse de Luxembourg, 207-209; leaves the stage for good, 210; grief for death of the Comtesse de Florensac, 210; turns to religion, 212; subject to mystical hallucinations, 212; last selfish letter, from Comte d'Albert, 213; her dead body cast on a rubbish heap, 214

Maupin, Monsieur, "accommodating" husband of Mlle. Maupin, 175; recalled by his wife, 206; his death, 209

Mazarin, 105, 106, 116, 144; delighted by conversion of Christina, 99; continues his favours, 115,

Ménage, M., introduces Christina, 105

Merino, "the famous guerilla chieftain-curaé," threatens Thérèse, 60; captures her, 61; described, 62; frees Thérèse, 63, 64

Milhaut, gives dinners for Thérèse, 25  
 Milan, 38

Molière, 188

Monaldeschi, Marquis, 116, 118, 129; Christina's chief equerry, executed by her command, 107 seq.

Mons, 83

"Monseigneur" (le Grand Dauphin), 211

"Monsieur." *See* "Philippe, Due d'Orléans."

Montelimar, 51

Montpensier, Mlle., 103

Moreau, dramatist, calls on Sardou, 1

Marino, Comtesse, subjected to a practical joke by Mlle. Maupin, 200, 201

Morlaix, 73  
 Mortagne, 78, 81  
 Muideblé, 6  
 Münster, 95  
**Napoleon** (Bonaparte), 3, 4, 38, 90; "a regular nigger," puts Sans-Gêne in the guard-room, 18 seq.; talks with Thérèse, 52-54; his downfall, 73; after Elba, 74, 75; and "the Breton Double," 92, 93; gives her the Legion of Honour, 94  
 Narbonne, 34, 37  
 Nerwinden, 82  
 Neuburg, Duke of, 128  
 Nîmes, 26  
 Noguez, General, saved by Thérèse, 30  
**Nombre de Dios**, 151  
**Olivencrantz**, controller of Christina's estates, 130  
 Orleans, 181  
**Paicabi**, 157  
 Paita, 152, 154, 165  
 Palenciar, 149  
 Pampeluna, 168  
 Panama, 151  
 Pancorvo, 149  
 Paris, where Thérèse becomes a celebrated figure, 51 seq.; entry of Christina, 103, 104  
 Pau, 169  
 Pelletier, M., 207  
 Perosa, 48, 49  
 Perpignan, 25, 31, 35  
 Pimentel, M., 98  
 Pisco, 162, 163  
 Poitiers, 182, 183  
 Poles, refuse Christina's offer to be their Queen, 127 seq.  
**Poncet**, Madame (*née* Ducaud Laborde, the "Breton Double," the "celebrated Female Hus-sar," 91 seq. made a quartermaster orderly by Napoleon, 92, 93; her son a trumpeter, 93; her bravery in battle, 94; given "Legion of Honour," 94; dies in want, 94  
**Poncet**, Quartermaster, husband of the Breton Double, 93  
 Pontoise, 4  
**Pont du Saint-Esprit**, 8  
 Portsmouth, 68  
 Port-Vendres, 25  
 Projean, gives dinner for Thérèse, 25  
 Provence, the loyalist army of, 8, 9  
**Quaregnon**, 82  
 Quinault, the poet, 187, 192, 201  
 Quinette, Minister of War, 84  
**Randon**, General, praises the "Widow Brulon," 90  
 Regnault, Jean, magistrate, 204  
 Réhu, Astier, 144  
 Réjane, in character of Sans-Gêne, 4  
 Rennes, 73, 74  
 Réyès, Senor, quarrel with Catalina, 153 seq.  
 Rhône, Valley of, 8  
 Rivani, Antonio, one of Christina's musicians, 125  
 Rochois, Mlle., 189, 190  
 Rohan-Monbazon, Anne de, 185  
 Rome, 99, 116, 128  
 Roscoff, 73  
 Rospiglion, Giulio. *See* "Pope Clement IX"  
 Rouen, 186  
 Rousseau, 44  
 Rousseau, François, *maitre d'armes*, 174  
 —, Jean, *maitre d'armes*, 174  
 Rueil, 6  
**Saint-Cloud**, 51, 56  
 Saint-Germain Leduc, 26  
 Saint Helena, 75  
 Saint-Nectaire, father of Comtesse de Florensac, 210  
 Saint-Saëns, Camille, 144  
 Saint-Simon, 211  
 Salis, Comtesse de, 72, 73

Sanna, 152, 154  
 Sans-Gêne. *See* Figueur, Thérèse,  
     and Madame Lefebvre.  
 Sardou, on taste of the general  
     public, 1; his Madame Sans-  
     Gêne, 4  
 Savigliano, Battle of, 42  
 Savoy, Duke of, 106  
 Scheldt, the, 85  
 Sentinelli, Christina's Captain of  
     the Guard, 107, 108, 116  
 Serannes, a fencing-master, elopes  
     and gives public displays, with  
     Mlle. Maupin, 176, 177, 178  
 Seville, 151, 155, 168  
 Soubrany, 27, 28; gives dinner for  
     Thérèse, 25  
 Soulès, General, 59  
 Spain, the Queen Mother of,  
     visits tomb of Napoleon, 90, 91  
 Sparre, Mlle. de, 99  
 Stockholm, 98, 116, 120  
 Strasburg, 1, 2, 55, 56  
 Sutter, Clément, drummer, first  
     meets Thérèse, 6; meets  
     Thérèse again, and marries her,  
     76, 77  
 Tagus, the, 65, 66  
 Tasso, and his Clorinda, 80  
 Terlon, Chevalier de, letter from  
     Christina, 131  
 Texeira, Jew banker of Hamburg, 95  
 Thévenard, Gabriel Vincent, ex-  
     scullion, 186; turns singer and  
     falls in love with Mlle. Maupin,  
     189; quarrels and reconciliation  
     with Mlle. Maupin, 201-203  
 Tolmay, 4  
 Tolosa, 148  
 Tonnerre, 4  
 Toulon, the Siege of, 15, 20, 21, 53  
 Toulouse, 173  
 Tournai, 85  
 Tournefort, one of the prisoners,  
     70 seq.  
 Tours, 184  
 Trujillo, 154  
 Tucuman, 159  
 Turin, 43, 106  
 Ulm, 56  
 Urban VIII, Pope, 169  
 Valdivia, captured by Indians, 157,  
     159  
 Valenciennes, 78, 79, 81  
 Valladolid, 60, 64, 75, 149, 150  
 Valmy, 81  
 Vanves, 75  
 Vauderwallen, a young officer,  
     rescued by Félicité de Fernig,  
     84; marries Félicité, 87  
 Vaux, Comte de, an emigré tailor,  
     46, 47  
 Vera Cruz, 169  
 Veuillot, quoted, 145  
 Viart, Claudine (Madame Figueur),  
     mother of Thérèse, 4  
 Viart, Grandpapa, 37  
 Viart, Joseph, sub-Lieutenant, uncle  
     who adopts Thérèse, 6 seq.;  
     joins army of republic, 13 seq.  
 Vienna, 56  
 Villeperdue, 184, 186  
 Villetard, Madame, quoted, 3, 4  
 Vittoria, 60, 148  
 Voltaire, 44; makes friends with L.  
     J. de Fernig, 78  
 Waterloo, 75, 94  
 Wrangel, in command of Swedish  
     troops, 126  
 Würtemberg, 56  
 Zadorra, the, 148  
 Zamarraga, 148  
 Zérain, François, friend of Catalina,  
     155





